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OF
PATHFINDER



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THE ADVENTURES
OF
PATHFINDER

ADAPTED FROM
J. FENIMORE COOPER'S "PATHFINDER"

BY
MARGARET N. HAIGHT

NEW YORK :: CINCINNATI :: CHICAGO
AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY

1909

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8 June 1910

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PATHFINDER

W. P. I

PREFATORY NOTE

J. Fenimore Cooper gives in his novel, *The Pathfinder*, an excellent picture of frontier life in the days before the Revolution. In this adaptation, while the original story has been preserved as far as possible, much description, lengthy argument, and discussion common to the novelist of the author's time has been omitted, with the intention of making the narrative of greater interest to young readers.

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THE ADVENTURES OF PATHFINDER

CHAPTER I

THE PATHFINDER

ON the upper margin of an opening in the forest, tree had been piled upon tree by a tempest, in such a manner as to enable a party of four people to ascend an elevation of more than thirty feet above the level of the earth to view the surrounding country. The vast trunks that had been broken and driven by the force of the wind lay blended like jackstraws; while their branches, still exhaling the fragrance of wilted leaves, were interlaced so as to give sufficient support to the hands. One tree had been completely uprooted; and its lower end filled with earth had been thrown uppermost in a way to make a sort of platform for the four adventurers when they had reached the top.

Two of the party were Indians, a man and his wife, belonging to the Tuscarora tribe, while their com-

panions were white people, a man who had the appearance and manner of a sailor, and his niece, a pretty, fair-haired girl whose name was Mabel Dunham. The sailor's name was Charles Cap.

The scene that they were gazing at was very beautiful. They could look from their height over an ocean of leaves, glorious and rich, belonging to the elm with its graceful and sweeping top, to the oak, and to the broad-leaved linden. This rich carpet stretched away toward the setting sun until it bounded the horizon by blending with the clouds. Here and there an opening allowed the birch, the quivering aspen, and the nut trees to be seen. Here and there, too, the tall, straight trunk of the pine rose high above the plain of leaves.

"Uncle," said Mabel, "this is like the view of the ocean you love so much."

"No one but a child, Magnet"—this was the name that the sailor had given his niece—"would think of likening this handful of leaves to a look at the real Atlantic. Where are your combing seas, your rollers, your breakers, your whales, or your waterspouts, in this bit of a forest, child?"

"And where are your tree tops, your solemn silence, fragrant leaves and your beautiful green, Uncle, on

the ocean? See!" exclaimed Mabel, "yonder is smoke curling over the tops of the trees. Can it come from a house?"

"I must show it to Arrowhead," answered the seaman, and touching the Indian who was standing near him lightly on the shoulder he pointed out a thin line of vapor that was stealing slowly out of the wilderness of leaves about a mile away.

The quick eye of Arrowhead, as the Tuscarora was called, instantly caught sight of the smoke, and for quite a minute he stood slightly raised on tip toe with distended nostrils, like the buck that scents a taint in the air. Then, falling back on his feet, he uttered a low exclamation.

"No wigwam there," said he. "Too much tree."

"But Indians must be there," said Cap. "Perhaps some old messmates of your own, Master Arrowhead."

"No Tuscarora—no Oneida—no Mohawk; pale-face fire," answered the Indian.

"Well, Magnet, we old sea dogs can tell a soldier's from a sailor's quid, or a lubber's nest from a mate's hammock, but I do not think that the oldest admiral in His Majesty's fleet can tell a king's smoke from a collier's."

“A paleface’s fire!” exclaimed Mabel. “Surely, Uncle, he cannot know *that!*”

“Why do you fancy that to be a paleface’s smoke, and not a redskin’s, Arrowhead?” asked Cap.

“Wet wood,” returned the warrior, “much wet—much smoke—much water—black smoke. Tuscarora much too cunning to make fire with water. Paleface too much book, and burn anything; much book, little know.”

“Well, that’s sensible,” said Cap, who did not care about learning. “How far are we now, Arrowhead, from this Lake Ontario toward which we have been shaping our course so many days?”

“Ontario like Heaven,” answered the Tuscarora, “one sun and the great traveller will know it.”

He pointed towards the northwest.

“Well,” said Cap, shrugging his shoulders, “I suppose there will be room enough on this fresh water pond when we reach it to work our canoe.”

The party now descended to the ground. Arrowhead, Cap, and Mabel made their way toward the smoke, while Dew-of-June, as the Indian’s wife was called, went to guard the canoe that they had left in the near by stream. She felt no fear, for she was used to the solitude and gloom of the forest.

For the first half mile the party observed no other caution beyond a rigid silence, but as they drew near the spot where the fire was known to be, much greater care became necessary. The forest, as usual, had little to hide the view below the branches, but the tall, straight trunks of trees. These columns served to conceal the party as they advanced.

"See, Saltwater," said Arrowhead, exultingly pointing through the vista of trees, "paleface fire!"

"The fellow is right," muttered Cap. "There they are sure enough, and eating their gruel as quietly as if they were in the cabin of a three decker."

"Paleface," said the Indian, holding up two fingers, "red man," holding up one. "Red man, Mohican—good; palefaces, English."

"Let us go at once," said Mabel, "and proclaim ourselves as friends."

Both Cap and Arrowhead thought it wisest to let Mabel approach alone, for the strangers would not fire seeing a mere girl. On the other hand, if they saw the men advancing, they would not wait for explanations, but attack them immediately.

When Mabel had got within a hundred feet of the fire, she trod on a dry stick, and the noise caused the

Mohican, as Arrowhead had pronounced him to be, and one of the white men to rise to their feet and look to their rifles that leaned against a tree. But when they saw the girl, the Indian sat down and went on with his meal, and the white man came forward to meet her.

“Fear nothing, young woman,” said he, “you have met Christian men in the wilderness. I am a hunter well known in these parts, and perhaps one of my names may have reached your ears. By the French and the redskins on the other side of the Big Lakes I am called Long Rifle; by the Mohicans, Hawkeye; while the troopers and rangers along this side of the water call me Pathfinder, because I have never been known to miss one end of the trail when there was a Mingo or a friend who stood in need of me at the other.”

The hunter did not say this boastfully, but honestly, as if he well knew that he deserved these names.

Mabel clasped her hands eagerly, and exclaimed,—
“Pathfinder! Then you are the friend my father promised to send to meet us?”

“Are you Sergeant Dunham’s daughter?”

“I am Mabel, and yonder hidden by the trees are my uncle, whose name is Cap, and a Tuscarora called

Arrowhead. We did not hope to meet you until we had nearly reached the shore of the Lake."

"I am no lover of the Tuscarora," said Pathfinder. "Is Dew-of-June, his wife, with him?"

Mabel answered him, and then Cap and Arrowhead drew near. The party proceeded toward the two who still remained near the fire. The Mohican continued to eat, though the second white man rose and took off his cap to Mabel. He was young and manly in appearance, and by his manner and dress showed that he, too, was a sailor.

"Here," said Pathfinder, "are the friends your father has sent to meet you. This is the great Delaware chief, Chingachgook. We call him the Big Serpent. This is my young friend, Jasper Western, who has passed his days on Lake Ontario. The Indians call him Eau-douce, which means sweet water; in other words, he is a sailor on fresh water."

Pathfinder now invited them to join their meal. Jasper Western placed the end of a log for Mabel to sit on, obtained a delicious morsel of venison for her, and gave her a draught of pure water from the spring, while the others attended to Cap and Arrowhead's wants.

“What distance are we from the fort, Master Pathfinder?” asked the old sailor.

“Little more than fifteen miles.”

“Shall we have to pick our way through these trees?”

“Nay, nay, you will go in the canoe,” answered the hunter.

“And what is to prevent the Indians from shooting us as we go by?”

Pathfinder laughed. He had already found out that Cap was a man who liked to talk a great deal about his exploits and adventures on the sea where he was brave and courageous, but who was timid and fearful in the woods. The old sailor was displeased to think that Sergeant Dunham expected him to travel so far by land. The sea to him was the only proper way for any one to journey. He did not think that Lake Ontario could be large if it were fresh water, and freely expressed his contempt of the pond, as he called it, to the others. Cap wore a tight queue done up in eel skin, while the top of his head was nearly bald, and he kept passing his hand over both as if to make sure that each was in its right place, while he was in the midst of so many dangers.

The party now decided to go on with their journey. They covered up their trail and proceeded toward

the stream where their canoe lay concealed in the care of Dew-of-June.

The waters which flow into the southern side of Ontario are in general narrow, sluggish and deep, but there are some exceptions, for many of the rivers have rapids and some have falls. Among the latter was the stream on which our friends were now journeying. The Oswego is formed by the junction of the Oneida and the Onondaga, and it pursues its way through a gentle, rolling country a few miles until it reaches the margin of a sort of natural terrace down which it tumbles ten or fifteen feet to another level, across which it glides or glances or flows with the silent progress of deep water until it reaches Ontario.

The canoe in which Cap and his party had travelled from Fort Stanwix lay at the side of this river, and all entered it except Pathfinder, who remained on the land in order to shove the light vessel off.

“Let her stern drift down stream, Jasper,” said he. “Should any of the Mingos strike our trail, they will not fail to look for signs in the mud, and if they discover that we have left the shore with the nose of the canoe upstream, it is a natural belief to think we went that way.”

Pathfinder made a leap and landed lightly on the

bow of the canoe. As soon as it reached the center of the river, the boat was turned, and it began to glide noiselessly down the stream. Cap was seated on a low thwart in the center; the Big Serpent knelt near him. Arrowhead and his wife occupied places forward. Mabel was behind her uncle, while the Pathfinder and Eau-douce, as the Indians called Jasper, stood erect, the one in the bow and the other in the stern, each using a paddle.

The Oswego was now becoming a deep, dark stream of no great width; its gloomy-looking current wound its way among overhanging bushes. A dull, heavy sound swept up the avenue formed by the trees.

"It is the river," said Pathfinder, "tumbling over some rocks half a mile below us."

"Had you better not give the canoe a shove and get nearer to the shore?" asked Cap. "You surely do not dream of going down a waterfall in this egg-shell of bark!"

"Certainly," said Pathfinder coolly, "the path lies over the falls, and it is much easier to shoot them than to unload the canoe and to carry it and its contents around a portage of a mile by land."

Mabel grew pale, for at that instant a fresh roar of the fall was borne to their ears by a gentle breeze.

“We thought by landing Miss Dunham and Dew-of-June and the two Indians,” said Jasper, “we three white men might carry the canoe over in safety, for we often shoot these falls.”

Cap would gladly have followed the women and Indians when they landed, but he felt ashamed to show any signs of weakness before the hunter and Eau-douce.

“Now, Eau-douce—a steady hand and a true eye,” said Pathfinder, “for all rests on you, seeing that we can count Master Cap for no more than a passenger.”

Mabel went to a rock on the water’s edge, hurriedly and trembling. As soon as she reached a point where she got a view of the falls, she screamed and covered her eyes.

When the boat was once more in the stream after landing the others, Pathfinder sank on his knees, slowly continuing to use his paddle. Eau-douce still stood at the end.

“Further west, boy—further west!” muttered Pathfinder; “there where you see the water foam!”

Eau-douce made no answer, for the canoe was in the center of the stream with its head pointed towards the fall, and it had already begun to quicken its motion. Cap would cheerfully have given up every claim to

glory to have been safe on the shore. He heard the roar of the fall thundering, becoming more and more distinct, louder and louder, and before him he saw its line cutting the forest below along which the green and angry water seemed stretched and shining.

“Down with your helm—down with your helm, man!” he shouted in his anxiety.

Pathfinder laughed in his peculiar silent fashion.

“Down we go of a certainty!” he cried. “Heave her stem up, boy; further up with her stern!”

The rest was like the passing of the wind. The canoe glanced into the channel, and for a few seconds it seemed to Cap that he was tossing in a caldron. He felt the bow of the canoe tip, saw the raging, foaming water, knew that the boat was tossed about like an eggshell—and then to his great joy discovered that it was gliding across the basin of still water below the fall.

Pathfinder continued to laugh, but he arose from his knees, and with a tin pot and a horn spoon he began to measure the water that had been taken in in the passage.

“Fourteen spoonfuls, Eau-douce! I have known you to go down with ten!”

Cap felt for his queue to see if it were still there, and then looked back in order to examine the dangers he had gone through. Most of the river fell perpendicular-



"He felt the bow of the canoe tip." (Facing page 18)

ly ten or twelve feet; but near its center the force of the current had so far worn away the rock as to allow the water to shoot through a narrow passage, at an angle of about forty or forty-five degrees. Down this ticklish descent the canoe had glanced, amid fragments of broken rocks, whirlpools and foam. But the very lightness of the canoe favored its descent; for borne on the crests of the waves, and directed by a steady eye and an arm full of muscle, it had passed like a feather from one pile of foam to another. There were a few rocks to be avoided, the proper direction was to be carefully noticed, and the fierce current did the rest.

CHAPTER II

A SKIRMISH WITH THE IROQUOIS

To say that Cap was astonished would not be expressing half his feelings. Still he would not say all that he felt, lest he might be granting too much in favor of fresh water and inland navigation.

“After all, Master Eau-douce,” he said, “to know the channel in such a place is the main point. I have had coxswains with me who could canoe down that shoot, too, if they only knew the channel.”

“It isn’t enough to know the channel,” said Pathfinder; “it needs nerves and skill to keep the canoe straight, and to keep her clear of the rocks too. There isn’t another boatman in all this region that can shoot the Oswego, but Eau-douce, with any certainty; though now and then one has blundered through.”

“I think little of this affair,” said Cap, now breathing more easily again; “nothing at all, to speak my mind freely. It’s a mere wash of spray to shooting London Bridge, which is done every day by hundreds of persons, and often by the most delicate ladies in

the land. The King's Majesty has shot the bridge in his royal person."

"Well, I want no delicate ladies or King's Majesties (God bless 'em) in the canoe, in going over these falls, for a boat's breadth either way may make a drowning matter of it. Eau-douce, we shall have to carry Master Cap over Niagara yet to show him what may be done on a frontier."

"Master Pathfinder, you must be joking! Surely it is not possible for a bark canoe to go over that mighty cataract!"

"You were never more mistaken, Master Cap, in your life. Nothing is easier, and many is the canoe I have seen go over it, with my own eyes. For my part, I think the largest ship that ever sailed the ocean might be carried over, could she once get into the rapids."

Cap did not see the wink which Pathfinder exchanged with Eau-douce.

"Anyone might have seen how fearless you were," continued the hunter, "and how little you cared about the matter. I went over once with a new hand, and he jumped out of the canoe just as it tipped, and you may judge what a time he had of it."

"What became of the poor fellow?" asked Cap.

“What became of him? Why, he went down the falls topsy-turvy—as would have happened to a courthouse or a fort.”

“If it should jump out of a canoe,” interrupted Jasper, smiling.

By this time the party had reached the place where Jasper had left his own canoe concealed in the bushes. Now Eau-douce, Cap, and his niece in one boat, Pathfinder, Arrowhead and Dew-of-June in the other, floated down the current. The Mohican had already gone down the banks of the river by land, looking cautiously for the signs of an enemy.

The Oswego below the falls is a more rapid, unequal stream than it is above them. There are places where the river flows in the quiet stillness of deep water, but many shoals and rapids occur, and in that day when everything was in its natural state, some of the passes were not altogether without danger. Very little exertion was required on the part of those who managed the canoes, except in those places where the swiftness of the current and the presence of rocks required care; when, indeed, not only vigilance but great coolness, readiness, and strength of arm became necessary in order to avoid dangers. The Mohican chief knew this, and when he wished to stop the canoes

in order to speak to his friends, he selected a place where the rivers flowed tranquilly, and where there was no danger for the travellers.

After the canoes had gone a little distance, Pathfinder called,—

“What is that in the river beneath the bushes?”

“’Tis the Big Serpent,” answered Eau-douce. “He is making signs to us in a way that I don’t understand.”

“’Tis the Serpent as sure as I am a white man, and he wishes us to drop in nearer the shore.”

With a strong sweep of his paddle, the Pathfinder threw the head of his canoe toward the shore, motioning to Jasper to follow. In a minute both boats were silently drifting down the stream within reach of the bushes that overhung the water. As the travellers drew near the Indian, he made a sign to them to stop. Then he and the Pathfinder talked together earnestly in the Delaware language.

The Mohican told him that he had discovered that the hostile tribe of Iroquois, or Mingos as the hunter called them, were in the woods, and to prove it showed him the bowl of an Indian pipe made of soapstone. In its center was carved a small Latin cross, showing that it must belong to a savage in the

pay of the French. The Mohican pointed to the spot where he had found it, now a hundred yards distant from that where they stood. They both ascended the bank and examined the trail with the utmost care. Then the white man returned to the canoe and his red friend disappeared in the forest.

Pathfinder now told Jasper to creep up along the bank, and near a turn in the river to light a fire with damp wood, so that the smoke might draw the enemy there, and in the meanwhile they could seek a place of concealment on the river.

This Jasper did, and then the party glided down the stream until they came to a place where the bushes were thick and overhung the water, forming a complete canopy of leaves. There the canoes were stationed. The hunter and Arrowhead went into the thicket, where they cut off the larger stems of several alders and other bushes. The ends of these little trees were forced into the mud outside the canoes, the water not being very deep, and in the course of ten minutes a thick screen was put up. The Pathfinder looked for bushes that had curved stems, so that the artificial thicket had not the appearance of growing in the stream, but of shooting out from the

bank. No one would ever think that there was a hiding place behind those bushes.

The Mohican now made his appearance, moving slowly under the bank.

“The Serpent sees the knaves,” whispered Pathfinder. “They have bit at the bait and have ambushed the smoke.”

The Mohican, who had gone several feet lower down the stream than the artificial cover, suddenly stopped, looked keenly at the bushes, made a few hasty steps backward, and, bending his body carefully, separated the branches and appeared among them.

“Iroquois,” he said, and then told the rest that the enemy were deceived by the fire that Jasper had built and had been trying to approach it unseen. There were fifteen of them in the party. After they had examined the fire and had seen that it had been kindled to mislead them, they separated, some plunging again into the woods, while six or eight came down the stream towards the place where the canoes had landed.

“Let us run out the canoes at once,” said Jasper, eagerly. “The current is strong, and by using the paddles vigorously we shall soon be beyond the reach of these scoundrels!”

“Aye, you are active at the paddle and the oar,

Eau-douce, but a Mingo is more active at his mischief," said Pathfinder. "The canoes are swift, but a rifle bullet is swifter."

A touch on his shoulder caused the speaker to cease. Mabel was standing erect in the canoe, and one arm was extended with a fishing-rod, the end of which had touched the Pathfinder. The latter bowed his head to look out through the bushes, and then whispered to Jasper.

"The Mingos! Stand to your arms, my men, but lie quiet!"

Jasper took his post near Mabel, with his rifle cocked and poised in readiness to fire. Arrowhead and Chingachgook crawled to the cover and lay in wait like snakes, while Dew-of-June covered her head with her calico robe. Cap loosened both his pistols, but seemed at a loss to know what to do.

It was an alarming moment. Just as Mabel touched the shoulder of her guide, three of the Iroquois or Mingos, as the hunter called them, appeared in the water at the bend of the river within a hundred yards of the cover, and halted to examine the stream below. They were all in their war paint, and armed for an expedition against their foes. One pointed down

the stream, a second up the stream, and a third toward the opposite bank.

Pathfinder managed to get the two Indians and Jasper near him, and then began to whisper his plans.

“We must be ready—we must be ready,” he said. “There are three of them, and we are five. Eau-douce, you take the one that is painted like death; Chingachgook, I give you the chief; and Arrowhead must keep his eye on the young one. By no means fire until I give the word.”

The near approach of their enemies made silence necessary. The Iroquois were slowly descending the stream while the rustling of leaves and snapping of twigs soon proved that another party was moving along the bank directly abreast of the first party. Both stopped when they saw each other, in front of the hidden travellers, and carried on a conversation over their heads. They spoke in a language that the Indians and Pathfinder understood.

“The trail is washed away by the water!” said one from the stream.

“The palefaces have left the shore in their canoes,” answered the speaker on the bank.

“It cannot be. The rifles of our warriors below are certain.”

“Let my young men look as if their eyes were eagles’,” said the eldest warrior among those who were wading in the river.

It was soon evident from the noise of the bushes that the party on the bank had passed the cover, but the group in the water still remained scanning the shore with eyes that glared through their war paint like coals of fire. After a pause of two or three minutes, these three began also to descend the stream step by step. In this manner they passed the artificial screen, and Pathfinder opened his mouth in a hearty but noiseless laugh.

Just at that moment, the last of the three Indians cast a look behind, and suddenly stopped. He gazed so steadily at one of the bushes that the concealed party knew his suspicions were aroused. Without calling to his companions, he turned on his own footsteps, and while the other continued to descend the river, he approached the bushes. Some of the leaves which were exposed to the sun had drooped a little, and this had caught the quick eye of the Indian.

He cautiously pushed aside the branches, and stepped within the hiding place, where the travellers met his eye, looking like so many breathless statues.

Chingachgook raised his arm, and the tomahawk

of the Delaware descended on the head of his foe. The Iroquois fell back into the water at a spot where the current was swift, and was immediately carried down the stream.

“There is not a moment to lose!” said Jasper, tearing aside the bushes as he spoke. “Do as I do, Master Cap; and you, Mabel, lie at your length in the canoe.”

He seized the bow of the light boat and dragged it along the shore, wading himself, while Cap pushed behind. Pathfinder dragged his canoe, and Arrowhead pushed; while the Delaware leaped on the bank and plunged into the forest. When Pathfinder reached the current, he felt a sudden change in the weight he was dragging, and looking back, he found that both the Tuscarora and his wife had deserted him.

There was no time to pause, for he heard the report of a rifle; then he saw that Jasper was crossing the stream, standing erect in the stern of the canoe, while Cap was seated forward. Both were using their paddles vigorously. Pathfinder sprang into the stern of his own canoe, and commenced crossing the stream himself, at a point so much lower than that of his companions as to offer his own body for a target to the enemy.

“Keep well up the current, Jasper,” shouted the gallant guide, as he swept the water with long, steady strokes of the paddle. “Pull for the alder bushes opposite, and leave the Mingos to the Serpent and me.”

Shot succeeded shot in quick succession, all now being aimed at the solitary man in the nearest canoe. Once a rifle bullet cut a lock of hair from his temple, but otherwise he was unharmed. By this time, the Pathfinder was in the center of the river, and the other canoe had nearly gained the opposite shore. A few strokes of the paddle were given, and the boat shot into the bushes. Mabel and her uncle were hurried to land by Jasper, and for the present all three were safe.

Not so with the Pathfinder; for the Indians on the shore rushed down the bank and joined their friends who stood still in the water. The canoe was only a hundred yards from their rifles. The hunter knew that his safety depended altogether on keeping in motion. But a new difficulty now arose. A party that had been left in ambush below, arrived. There were about ten, and they had posted themselves at a spot where the water dashed among rocks and over shallows in a way to form a rapid, which, in the lan-

guage of the country, is called a rift. The Pathfinder saw that if he entered this rift, nothing could save him, and it was beyond his skill to get out of the power of the furious current which was rapidly taking him there.

With his usual coolness he seized his rifle and pack, leaped into the water, and began to wade from rock to rock, taking the direction of the western shore. The canoe whirled about, now rolling over some slippery stone, now filling and then emptying itself, until it lodged on the shore within a few yards of the spot where the Iroquois had posted themselves.

Rifle flashed after rifle, and the bullets whistled around Pathfinder's head amid the roar of the waters. Still he went on like one who bore a charmed life. As he was forced to wade in water that rose nearly to his arms, while he kept his rifle and ammunition raised above the current, he soon became tired, and he was glad to stop at a large stone that rose so high above the river that its upper surface was dry. The western shore was only fifty feet distant, but the swift, dark current that glanced by, showed that he must swim the rest of the way.

The Indians gathered about the deserted canoe,

and, having found the paddles, were preparing to cross the river.

“Pathfinder!” called a voice from among the bushes on the western shore, “had you not better leave the rifle on the rock, and swim to us before the rascals can get afloat?”

“A true woodsman never quits his piece while he has any powder in his horn or a bullet in his pouch, Jasper.”

“Master Cap has gone up to our canoe, and will cast the branch of a tree into the river to try the current. See, there it comes already; if it float fairly, you must raise your arm, when the canoe will follow. If the boat should pass you, the eddy below will bring it up, and I can recover it,” said Jasper.

The floating branch came in sight, and Pathfinder held it up in the air as a sign of success. Cap understood the signal, and soon the canoe was launched into the stream, and was floating in the same direction as the branch. In a minute Pathfinder had caught it. He gave the boat a shove, threw himself in it, and it shot across the current where Jasper seized it as it came to land.

“Now, Jasper, we shall see if a Mingo of them all dare cross the Oswego in the teeth of Killdeer!” cried

the hunter. "See, three of them are actually getting into the canoe!"

As the Pathfinder had said, three warriors were in the canoe, two holding their rifles in aim, the other standing erect in the stern to use the paddle.

"Shall I fire?" demanded Jasper in a whisper.

"Not yet, boy—not yet. There are but three of them, and if Master Cap, yonder, knows how to use the popguns he carries in his belt, we may even let them land, and then we shall recover the canoe. You tell me that the sergeant's daughter is safe in a hollow stump with the opening hid by branches? The sweet one might lie there a month and laugh at the Mingos."

At that instant the sharp report of a rifle was heard, when the Indian in the stern of the canoe fell into the water holding the paddle in his hand. A small wreath of smoke floated out from among the bushes of the eastern shore.

"That is the Serpent hissing!" exclaimed the Pathfinder.

The canoe no sooner lost its guide than it floated with the stream, and was soon sucked into the rapids of the rift. The two savages had to make the best of their way to the friendly shore, swimming and wading.

The canoe itself lodged on a rock in the center of the stream.

“Is that a dog, or a deer, swimming toward this shore?” asked Jasper.

Pathfinder started, for, sure enough, an object was crossing the stream above the rift. A second look told that it was a man.

“He is pushing something before him as he swims, and his head is like a drifting bush!” said Jasper.

“The Big Serpent, as I live!” exclaimed Pathfinder, looking at his companion and laughing until the tears came into his eyes with pure delight. “He has tied bushes to his head so as to hide it, put the horn on top, lashed the rifle to that bit of log he is pushing before him, and has come over to join his friends. Ah’s me! The times and times that he and I have cut such pranks right in the teeth of the Mingos!”

The Serpent now reached the shore directly in front of his two comrades, and rising from the water he shook himself like a dog.

“Hugh!” he exclaimed.

As he landed, he was met by the Pathfinder who spoke to him in the language of the warrior’s people.

“Was it well done, Chingachgook,” he said reproachfully, “to ambush a dozen Mingos alone?”

"The Great Serpent is a Mohican warrior; he sees only his enemies when he is on the warpath, and his fathers have struck the Mingos from behind since the waters began to run," answered Chingachgook.

"What is the chief about to do?" exclaimed Jasper, who saw, at that moment, that the Indian suddenly left the Pathfinder and advanced to the water's edge. "He will not be so mad as to return to the other shore for anything he may have forgotten!"

"Not he—not he, lad," answered the other. "Harkee lad, Chingachgook is not a white man like ourselves, but a Mohican chief."

"I understand you; your friend has gone to secure the dead Indian's scalp."

"'Tis his gift, and let him enjoy it. We are white men, and could not do such a thing, but it is honor in the eyes of a redskin to do so. A savage will be a savage, let him keep what company he may. If Indians are of no use, Indians would not have been created; and I suppose it would be found that even the Mingo tribes were made for some proper purpose, though I confess I could not say what it is."

Here a great outcry from among the Iroquois was succeeded by the quick reports of their rifles. Chingach-

gook answered by giving the war whoop, and for a minute the arches of the silent woods, and the deep vista formed by the course of the river, echoed with terrific cries. The warrior soon returned with his trophy, and gave his companions one glance of triumph, and then seemed to forget his recent exploit.

CHAPTER III

THE CUNNING OF THE GREAT SERPENT

• “Jasper,” said the Pathfinder, “step down to the station of Master Cap, and ask him to join us; we have little time for a council, and yet our plans must be laid quickly.”

The young man obeyed, and in a few minutes the four were assembled near the shore, completely concealed from the view of their enemies. By this time the dusk of the evening was drawing near. The sun had already set, and the twilight of a low latitude would soon pass into the darkness of deep night.

“The moment has come, men,” said Pathfinder, “when our plans must be coolly laid. In an hour’s time these woods will be as dark as midnight, and if we are ever to gain the garrison, it must be done under the favor of this advantage. What do you say, Master Cap?”

“In my judgment,” said the sailor, “all we have to do is to go on board the canoe, and run for the haven as wind and tide will allow.”

"We shall be more exposed in the river than in the woods," returned the guide, "and then there is the Oswego rift below us. I am troubled, Jasper, to say which way we ought to counsel and advise."

"If the Serpent and myself could swim into the river and bring off the other canoe," the young sailor replied, "it would seem to me that our safest course would be the water."

They decided that this latter course was the better to follow, and Jasper and the Delaware made preparations to go after the other boat, which you will remember had been deserted by the two savages in the rapids.

The shades of evening fell fast upon the forest, and by the time all was ready for the attempt, it was found impossible to see objects on the opposite shore. While Jasper and his companion entered the river, armed with nothing but their knives and the Delaware's tomahawk, the guide brought Mabel from her place of concealment, and bidding her and Cap proceed along the shore to the foot of the rapids, he got into the canoe in order to carry it to the same place.

This was easily done. The canoe was laid against the bank, and Mabel and her uncle entered it, taking their seats as usual, while the Pathfinder, erect in the

stern, clutched a bush to prevent the swift stream from sweeping them down its current. Several minutes of breathless expectation followed, while they awaited the result of the bold attempt of their comrades.

It will be understood that the two men were compelled to swim across a deep and rapid channel before they could come to water shallow enough to wade in. Jasper and the Serpent struck the bottom, side by side, at the same instant. Having secured firm footing, they took hold of each other's hands and waded slowly toward the place where they supposed the canoe to be. By the time they believed themselves to be in the center of the stream, they knew where the two shores were, merely by the masses of darkness against the sky. Once or twice they altered their course because of unexpectedly stepping into deep water, for they knew that the boat had lodged on the shallowest part of the rift. In fact, they wandered about in the water for nearly a quarter of an hour, and at the end of that time found themselves no nearer the object of their search than they had been at its commencement.

Just as the Delaware was about to stop, he saw the form of a man moving about in the water almost within reach of his arm. Jasper was at his side, and

he at once understood that the stranger was an Iroquois and engaged on the same errand as he was himself.

“Mingo!” he whispered in Jasper’s ear. “The Serpent will show his brother how to be cunning.”

Jasper understood how necessary it was to trust all to the Delaware chief. He kept back, while his friend moved cautiously in the direction in which the strange form had vanished. In another moment it was seen again moving toward themselves.

“Hugh!” exclaimed the Iroquois, adding in his own language, “the canoe is found, but there were none to help me. Come, let us raise it from the rock.”

“Willingly,” answered Chingachgook who understood the dialect, “lead; we will follow.”

The stranger, unable to distinguish between voices and accents amid the raging of the rapids, led the way, and, the two others keeping close at his heels, all three speedily reached the canoe. The Iroquois laid hold of one end, Chingachgook placed himself in the center, and Jasper went to the opposite end, as it was important that the stranger should not detect the presence of a paleface.

“Lift,” said the Iroquois, and by a trifling effort the canoe was raised from the rock, held a moment

in the air to empty it, and then placed carefully on the water. The Iroquois, who led, of course, being at the upper end of the boat, went towards the spot where his friends awaited his return. Suddenly, the three found themselves the center of a party of four others who were also searching for the canoe. The five Iroquois seemed to understand their errand perfectly and pressed on toward the eastern shore.

When the body of friends and foes united reached the margin of the eastern channel, they found that the river was too deep to be waded. They stopped a moment to determine the manner in which the boat was to be carried across. This halt added to the danger of discovering the presence of Jasper, who, however, had the precaution to throw his cap into the bottom of the canoe. His position, too, at the stern of the boat favored him, the Iroquois naturally keeping their looks directed the other way. But Chingachgook stood in the midst of his most deadly foes, and he could scarcely stir without touching one of them. He waited with the patience of an Indian for the instant when he should be required to act.

“Let all my young men, but two, one at each end of the canoe, cross and get their arms,” said one who seemed to be the chief. “Let the two push over the boat.”

The Indians quietly obeyed, leaving Jasper at the stern, and the Iroquois who had found the canoe at the bow, Chingachgook burying himself so deep in the river as to be passed by the others. The Delaware allowed the Indian at the bow to push off into the deep water, and then all three were swimming in the direction of the eastern shore. Instead, however, of helping the canoe across the swift current, no sooner did the Delaware and Jasper find themselves within its influence, than both began to swim in a way to check their progress across the stream. This was done so gradually that the Indian at the bow thought he was merely struggling against the current. In the meanwhile the boat was drifting downstream, and in about a minute, it was floating in still deeper water at the foot of the rift. Here the Iroquois looked back for the first time, saw what his companions were doing, and realized that he was alone with enemies.

Dashing the water aside, he sprang at Chingachgook, and the two Indians, relinquishing their hold of the canoe, seized each other like tigers. Jasper now had complete command of the boat, which he quickly ran to the western shore. Here he found the rest of his party and told them what had happened.

They all listened intently to catch any sound of the

struggle that had just taken place. Nothing could be heard beyond the steady roar of the rushing river.

“Take this paddle, Jasper,” said Pathfinder calmly, “and follow with your own canoe. It is unsafe for us to remain here longer.”

“Do not let us leave the Serpent,” exclaimed Jasper.

“Tut, tut!” said the guide impatiently. “If you value your lives, think of reaching the garrison, and leave the Delaware in the hands of Providence.”

The canoes dropped slowly down with the current, within the deep shadows of the western shore. Jasper thought that they might drift down to the mouth of the stream in two hours. The quiet of deep solitude reigned in that vast forest. The air sighed through ten thousand trees, the water rippled, and, at places, even roared along the shores; and now and then was heard the creaking of a branch. Once, Pathfinder fancied he heard the howl of a distant wolf. So while they talked in low voices, the canoes travelled swiftly down the river.

“There is the footstep of a man on the bank,” whispered Pathfinder.

“It may be the Delaware,” answered Jasper. “He would follow us of course down this bank, and would

know where to look for us. Let me draw closer in to the shore, and reconnoiter."

"Go, boy, but be light with the paddle."

Ten anxious minutes followed Jasper's disappearance in his canoe. During this time the party continued to float with the current, no one speaking. The same solemn quiet reigned as before; the washing of the water and the sighing of the trees, alone interrupting the slumbers of the forest. At the end of that time, the snapping of dried branches and the sound of smothered voices were faintly heard.

"I see something on the water," whispered Mabel.

"It is the canoe!" returned the Pathfinder. "All must be safe, or we would have heard from the lad."

In another minute, the two canoes again floated side by side. The Delaware now related all that had passed. He had conquered his enemy, landed with caution, and made his way quickly down the bank of the river. He had heard enough to know that Arrowhead had betrayed them to their enemies.

They were now drawing near another rift called the Oswego Rift. Mabel took a seat in Jasper's canoe, and both parties made preparations to shoot the falls, as they did not think it safe to land. As the canoes stole silently along, the roar of the water was heard,

and it required all of Cap's courage to keep his seat, while these sounds were approached in darkness and gloom.

"Pathfinder is striking the rapids too near the center of the river, but I cannot make him hear me now," said Jasper. "Hold firmly to the canoe, Mabel, and fear nothing."

At the next moment, the swift current sucked them into the rift, and for three or four minutes Mabel saw nothing around her but sheets of glancing foam; heard nothing but the roar of waters. Twenty times did the canoe appear about to dash against some rock, and as often did it glide away. Soon they were floating quietly in the deep water below the rapids.

"All is over, Mabel," Jasper cried. "The danger is past, and you may now hope to meet your father this very night."

"What has become of the other canoe?"

"I see something near us on the water."

A few strokes of the paddle brought Jasper to the side of the object in question. It was the other canoe, empty and bottom upwards. After searching for the swimmers a while, Jasper discovered Cap drifting down with the current, the old seaman preferring the chances of drowning to those of landing among savages. He

was hauled into the canoe and the search ended, for Jasper felt sure that the others had waded to the shore.

The remainder of the journey was short. A dull, roaring sound was heard, which Jasper said was the surf of the lake. Low curved spits of land lay before them, into the bay formed by one of which the canoe glided, and then it shot up noiselessly upon a gravelly beach. In the course of a few minutes sentinels had been passed, a gate was opened, and Mabel was safe in the shelter of her father's house.

CHAPTER IV

THE SHOOTING MATCH

At the time of which we are writing, Oswego was one of the extreme frontier posts of the British possessions on this continent. It was occupied by a battalion of a Scotch regiment, into which many Americans had been received. Mabel's father was sergeant of the battalion. The fort itself was better adapted to resist an attack of savages, than to withstand a regular siege. There were bastions of earth and logs, a dry ditch, a stockade, a parade, and barracks of logs. One or two heavy guns looked out from the summits.

When Mabel awoke the next day and came out into the pure air of the morning, she found herself at the foot of a bastion. She climbed up the grassy slope, and saw all that had been hidden the night before.

To the southward lay the forest through which she had been journeying so many weary days. Turning from this view, a new scene presented itself. To the north and east and west, in every direction, lay a field

of rolling waters. No land was to be seen, except the near by coast, which stretched to the right and left in an unbroken outline of forest, with wide bays and low headlines; still, much of the shore was rocky, and into its caverns the waters occasionally rolled.

“How beautiful!” exclaimed Mabel, but her words were interrupted by the touch of a finger on her shoulder. Turning she found Pathfinder at her side. He was leaning quietly on his long rifle, and laughing in his quiet manner.

“Here you have both our domains,” he said, “Jasper’s and mine. The lake is for him, and the woods are for me.”

“Why, Pathfinder,” answered Mabel, “I was afraid that some accident had happened to you on that rift.”

“No, no, we waded ashore and we landed with our arms in our hands,” said Pathfinder briefly. “There is Jasper yonder in the cove, looking after the canoes and keeping an eye on his beloved little craft.”

Where the Oswego joined the lake there were two curved, gravelly points, forming two coves within the river. One was deeply indented and served as a little port for the post. Several skiffs and canoes were hauled up on the shore, and in the cove itself lay Jasper’s little craft. She was cutter-rigged, of about

forty tons burden, and was so neatly built and painted as to have something of the air of a vessel of war. The long coach-whip pennant that she wore at once proclaimed her to be the property of the king. Her name was the Scud.

“That, then, is the vessel of Jasper!” said Mabel. “Are there many others on this lake?”

“The French have three, one of which they tell me is a real ship such as are used on the ocean, another a brig, and a third is a cutter like the Scud, here, which they call the Squirrel. Jasper seldom goes out, that the Squirrel is not at his heels. He is a brave boy, as all on the frontier know, but he has no gun except a little howitzer, and then his crew consists only of two men besides himself and a boy. The French carry cannon and never show their faces outside of Frontenac, without having some twenty men in their cutter.”

“There is my uncle!” exclaimed Mabel, “none the worse for his swim, and coming to look at this inland sea.”

Sure enough, Cap now made his appearance on the bastion, where, after nodding to his niece and her companion, he made a deliberate survey of the water before him.

“Well, Master Cap,” asked the Pathfinder, “is it not a beautiful sheet, and fit to be named a sea?”

“Just as I expected!” answered Cap in contempt. “A pond in dimensions!”

“What is the matter with Ontario, Master Cap? It is large and fair to look at.”

“Do you call this large?” said Cap. “I will just ask you what there is large about it.”

“But, uncle,” said Mabel, “no land is to be seen, except here on our own coast. To me it looks exactly like the ocean.”

“This bit of a pond look like the ocean! Well, Magnet, that from a girl who has had real seamen in her family is downright nonsense. What is there about it that has even the outline of a sea on it?”

“Why, there is water—water—water; nothing but water as far as the eye can see.”

“Magnet, I am astonished that you should think this water even looks like sea water! Now, I dare say that there isn’t such a thing as a whale in all your lake, Master Pathfinder!”

“I never heard of one, I will confess,” answered the guide.

“Nor a grampus, nor a porpoise,” continued Cap, who kept his eye fastened on Pathfinder in order to

see how far he might go; "nor herring, nor albatross, nor flying fish?"

"A fish that can fly! Master Cap, do not think because we are mere borderers, that we have no knowledge. I know there are squirrels that can fly—"

"A squirrel fly? Master Pathfinder, do you suppose that you have got a boy on his first voyage, up here among you?"

"And why isn't my squirrel as likely to have wings as your fish?" demanded the guide.

"There is Jasper's cutter, uncle," said Mabel hurriedly; "and a very pretty vessel I think it is. Its name is the Scud."

"Aye, it will do well enough for a lake, perhaps, but it's no great affair. The lad has got a standing bowsprit, and who ever saw a cutter with a standing bowsprit before? But I must have a cruise with the lad, Magnet, just for the name of the thing. It would never do to say I got in sight of this pond, and went away without taking a trip on it."

"Well, well, you needn't wait long for that," returned Pathfinder; "for the sergeant is about to embark with a party to relieve a post among the Thousand Islands, and, as I heard him say he intended Mabel should go along, you can join the company too."

Sergeant Dunham, Mabel's father, now joined the group. He was a tall, stern-looking man with an imposing figure. He was very accurate and precise in his acts and manner of thinking, and had had so much experience in military affairs that even the Scotch laird, Duncan of Lundie, who commanded the post, treated him with respect. After he had greeted his daughter and brother, he said to Pathfinder,—

“We shall embark a relief party, shortly, for a post on the lake, and I may have to go with it, in which case I intend to take Mabel to make my broth for me, and I hope, brother, that you will not despise a soldier's fare for a month or so.”

“That will depend on the manner of marching. I have no love for woods or swamps.”

“We shall sail in the Scud,” answered the Sergeant, and then led the way into the garrison for breakfast.

The table of Sergeant Dunham partook of the abundance and luxuries of the frontier, for at that time the country was filled with all kinds of birds and animals, such as geese, ducks, deer, bears, rabbits and squirrels, while the lake and rivers supplied fish of various sorts. A delicious broiled salmon smoked on a platter, hot venison steaks sent up their appetizing odors, and

several dishes of cold meats were set before the guests, and heartily enjoyed. After they had finished their meal, Mabel went out again to view the lake with her uncle, while the others attended to their various duties.

A week passed in the usual routine of a garrison. Mabel was becoming used to the life and acquainted with her father's friends, when preparations were made for the cruise in the Scud. Both Pathfinder and Chingachgook were to be of the party, beside a lieutenant named David Muir. On the day before the departure, Major Duncan had given permission to the younger officers to hold a shooting match. The prizes were to be a silver-mounted powderhorn, a leathern flask and a silk calash or hood for a lady. The man who won the last, was to offer it to the lady he loved best.

It was now September, a month in which the stormy gales of the coast often appear to force themselves across the country as far as the Great Lakes. On the day the garrison assembled for the shooting match, there was a refreshing breeze, and the heat of summer was not felt. One standing on the ramparts of the fort and gazing on the waste of glittering water, and on the slumbering and seemingly boundless forest, would have thought the spot the very home of peace-

fulness and security; but Duncan of Lundie too well knew that the woods might at any moment give up their hundreds, and that even the lake offered a highway to the French who could come upon him at any unguarded moment. Parties were sent out to scour the forest, and one entire company held the fort under arms.

The spot selected for the sports was a clearing a little west of the fort, and on the immediate bank of the lake. Although the regular arms of the regiment were muskets, some fifty rifles were produced on the present occasion. Among those who carried the weapon, were some five or six who had reputations for knowing how to use it particularly well.

The distance was a hundred yards, and the weapon was to be used without a rest; the target, a board with circular lines in white paint, having the bull's eye in the center. A low staging of planks near the bank of the lake held the women and children of the garrison who had come to view the match. Among these was Mabel, hoping, of course, that either Pathfinder or Jasper would win.

Some eight or ten of the best marksmen now took their places and began to fire in succession. Some of them hit the bull's-eye, and others struck the circles that surrounded it. None could proceed to the



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“Pathfinder now took his place.”

second trial who had failed in the first. Among the most prominent competitors were Lieutenant Muir, Jasper Eau-douce, and the Pathfinder.

Jasper's face flushed, as he stepped upon the stand. He raised the muzzle for a single instant with exceeding steadiness, and fired. The bullet passed directly through the center of the bull's-eye. Lieutenant Muir next fired. His bullet went through the hole made by Jasper's. Pathfinder now took his place. The air and attitude of this celebrated guide and hunter were extremely fine as he raised his tall arm and leveled his weapon. His honest open features were burnt to a bright red. Thought was scarcely quicker than his aim, and, as the smoke floated above his head, the breech of the rifle was seen on the ground, the hand of the Pathfinder was leaning on the barrel, and he was laughing in his usual silent fashion. His bullet had gone through the hole made by Jasper's shot.

In a few minutes the second trial of skill commenced. A common nail was driven lightly into the target, its head having been first touched with paint, and the marksman was required to hit it, or he lost his chances in the succeeding trials. There might have been half a dozen that tried. The first three failed, all

coming quite near the mark, but none touching it. Lieutenant Muir succeeded in carrying away a small portion of the head of the nail, planting his bullet by the side of its point. The bullet of Eau-douce' hit the nail square, and drove it into the target within an inch of the head.

“Be all ready to clench it, boys,” cried out Pathfinder, stepping into his friend's tracks. “Never mind a new nail; I can see that, though the paint is gone, and what I can see, I can hit at a hundred yards, though it were only a mosquito's eye.”

The rifle cracked, the bullet sped its way, and the head of the nail was buried in the wood, covered by the piece of flattened lead. Only Pathfinder, Jasper, and Lieutenant Muir were left now for the third trial. A potato of large size was given to one who stood about twenty yards from the stand. At the word “Heave,” the vegetable was thrown into the air, and it was the business of the marksman to pierce it before it reached the ground.

Muir failed to touch the flying target. The honor of the silken calash lay between Jasper and Pathfinder. Jasper realized that he could never win in a trial with Pathfinder, and yet his heart was set on winning the calash which he wished to give to Mabel Dunham.

"This is an awful moment to me, Pathfinder," said Jasper, as he moved toward the stand.

"You seem to take the matter to heart, Jasper," the hunter remarked.

"I must own, Pathfinder, that I never hoped for success so much before. I suppose I must submit to be beaten, but I will make the effort if I die."

"What a thing is mortal man!" said Pathfinder, falling back to allow his friend room to take his aim.

The potato was thrown, Jasper fired, and the shout that followed announced that he had driven his bullet through the center.

"Here is a competitor worthy of you, Pathfinder!" cried Major Duncan in his delight, "and we may look to some fine shooting in the double trial."

The potato was tossed again, the rifle cracked, and then a look of disappointment and wonder succeeded among those who caught the falling target.

"The skin! The skin!" was the cry; "only the skin!"

"How's this, Pathfinder? Is Jasper Eau-douce to carry off the honors of the day?" asked the Major.

"The calash is his," returned the other, shaking his head and walking quietly away from the stand.

As Pathfinder had not buried his bullet in the potato,

but had only cut through the skin, the prize was immediately given to Jasper. The young sailor approached the spot where Mabel was looking on with the rest.

“Mabel,” he said, “this prize is for you, unless you do not care to accept it.”

“I do accept it Jasper; and it shall be a sign of the danger that I have passed in your and Pathfinder’s care.”

“Never mind me, never mind me!” exclaimed the generous hunter. “This is Jasper’s luck and Jasper’s gift. Give him full credit for both. My turn may come another day.”

The remainder of the sports offered nothing of interest, and the shooting match was soon over. Mabel realized, although Jasper did not, that the hunter had allowed the young sailor to carry off the prize, for Pathfinder was renowned far and wide for his skill and accuracy of aim in shooting.

CHAPTER V

THE SCUD SETS SAIL

Fort Frontenac was a post of the French above the Thousand Islands, and, as they held the garrison below, their stores and ammunition were sent up the river to Frontenac, to be forwarded along the shores of Ontario and the other lakes, among the Indians. Duncan of Lundie had sent one party down to take a station among the islands, to cut off some of the French boats, and this expedition was to be the second relief. The whole force consisted of Sergeant Dunham; Lieutenant Muir, ten privates, two non-commissioned officers, and a lad of fourteen. To these must be added Pathfinder, Cap, and Jasper, with the crew of the Scud. Mabel, and the wife of a soldier were the only women.

It was nearly dark when Mabel found herself in the boat that was to carry her off to the cutter. Jasper was in readiness to receive his passengers, and, as the deck of the Scud was but two or three feet above the water, they did not find it difficult to get on board. The

little vessel contained four apartments below. First in rank was what was called the after-cabin, which contained four berths. This was given over to the use of Mabel and the soldier's wife. The main cabin was used for Muir, the sergeant, Cap and Jasper. The corporals and common soldiers occupied the space beneath the main hatch. Pathfinder could roam through any part of the cutter he pleased. There was ample room for all on board. Chingachgook was out scouting the lake shores, and expected to join the Scud among the islands.

Sergeant Dunham returned to the shore, to receive his last orders from Major Duncan. He found the Major on the bastion.

"Have the men's knapsacks been examined?" demanded Duncan.

"All, your honor; and all are right."

"The ammunition—arms—?"

"All in order, Major Duncan, and fit for any service."

"The result of this undertaking, Sergeant Dunham, will mainly depend on you and on the Pathfinder," said Duncan.

"You may count on us both, Major Duncan. I know that the Pathfinder will not be wanting. One

thing is certain, we cannot suffer for lack of provisions with two such hunters as Pathfinder and the Serpent in company."

"That will never do, Dunham," said Duncan sharply; "and it comes of your American birth and American training! No soldier should ever rely on anything but his commissary for supplies. This irregularity of the provincials has played havoc enough with the king's service."

"General Braddock, your honor, might have been advised by Colonel Washington, and he is a provincial, as you call him. His Majesty has no more loyal subjects than the Americans."

"You are right, Dunham. You have not forgotten the howitzer?"

"Jasper took it on board this morning, sir."

Duncan now told the sergeant that he had received a letter that morning, advising him to be on his guard against Jasper, who, the letter said, had been bought by the French and was in their pay, and who would do his best to let the French at Frontenac capture the Scud and its party. The letter was not signed, but it had influenced the major a great deal in his opinion of Jasper.

The sergeant was at first surprised and grieved to

think that there were any doubts as to Jasper's fidelity. He felt that he could trust him with his life, if necessary. But by the time he had bidden farewell to Duncan and reached the side of the Scud, distrust and suspicion began to enter his mind. He felt that everything depended on his own vigilance. When he arrived on board, he led Pathfinder to the after-cabin, and closing the door with great caution, he said,—

“I have brought you here to talk about Jasper. Major Duncan has received some information which has led him to suspect that Eau-douce is false and in the pay of the enemy.”

“Duncan of Lundie has told you this, Sergeant Dunham?”

“He has, indeed, Pathfinder, and though I do not want to believe anything to Jasper's injury, I have a feeling which tells me I ought to distrust him.”

“I have known Jasper Eau-douce since he was a boy, and I have as much faith in his honesty as I have in my own, or that of the Serpent himself. No, no, I will believe naught against Jasper until I see it,” answered Pathfinder warmly. “Send for your brother, sergeant, and let us question him.”

Cap was called and told of the suspicions which the sergeant had regarding the lad, Eau-douce. He

did not seem to have many ideas about the affair, but said if anything went wrong, and it was necessary to arrest Jasper, he would manage the Scud. The sergeant made both Pathfinder and Cap promise to say nothing of the matter, and the whole party returned to the deck.

The sails had been hoisted, but as yet not a breath of air was in motion, and so still and placid was the lake, that the cutter lay like a fixture. Presently an oar blade fell in a boat, beneath the fort, and the sound reached the cutter as distinctly as if it had been produced on her deck. Then came a murmur like a sigh of the night, a fluttering of the canvas, the creaking of the boom, and the flap of the jib.

“Here’s the wind, Anderson,” called out Jasper to the oldest of his sailors; “take the helm.”

This brief order was obeyed; the helm was put up, the cutter’s bows fell off, and in a few minutes the water was heard murmuring under her head, as the Scud glanced through the lake at the rate of five miles in the hour.

“At this rate, Eau-douce,” said Mabel who sat near him on the deck, “our voyage will not be a long one.”

“It cannot be long while we steer in this direction,” answered Jasper; “for sixty or seventy miles will

take us into the St. Lawrence, which the French might make too hot for us; and no voyage on this lake can be very long."

"Sail, ho!" cried Master Cap, "or boat, ho! would be nearer the truth."

Jasper ran forward, and, sure enough, a small object could be seen about a hundred yards ahead of the cutter. At the first glance, he saw it was a bark canoe.

"This may be an enemy," the young man remarked; "and it may be well to overhaul him."

"He is paddling with all his might, lad," observed the Pathfinder, "and means to cross your bows and get to windward."

"Let her luff!" cried Jasper to the man at the helm.

The latter obeyed, and as the Scud was now dashing the water aside merrily, a minute or two put the canoe so far to the leeward as to render escape impossible. Jasper now sprang to the helm himself, and by careful handling got so near his chase that it was secured by a boat hook. On receiving an order, the two persons who were in the canoe, left it, and no sooner had they reached the deck of the cutter than they were found to be Arrowhead and his wife, Dew-of-June.

Pathfinder took Arrowhead aside, for he alone knew the Indian's language well enough to talk freely with

him, and asked him why he had deserted them. The savage answered that he had run away in order to save his life, for he made no doubt that all were to be massacred in the river.

“But why,” asked the guide, “has my brother been so long from the fort? His friends have thought of him often, but have never seen him.”

“Arrowhead’s wife followed Arrowhead; it was right in Arrowhead to follow his wife,” answered the Tuscarora smiling. “She lost her way, and they made her cook in a strange wigwam.”

“I understand you, Tuscarora. The woman fell into the hands of the Mingos, and you kept upon their trail. But how did you get that canoe, and why are you paddling towards the St. Lawrence instead of the garrison?”

“This canoe is mine,” said Arrowhead calmly. “I found it on the shore near the fort. Arrowhead saw the big canoe, and he loves to look on the face of Eau-douce. He was going towards the sun at evening in order to seek his wigwam; but finding that the young sailor was going the other way, he turned that he might look in the same direction. Eau-douce and Arrowhead were together on the last trail.”

Pathfinder now returned to the others and told what

he had heard. The sergeant decided to keep the savage on the cutter, and inquire into the matter the next morning. Jasper caused the sails to be filled, and the Scud resumed her course.

It was now getting towards the hour to set the watch, and when it was usual to retire for the night. Most of the party went below, leaving no one on deck but Cap, the sergeant, Jasper, and two of the crew. Arrowhead and his wife also remained.

“You will find a place for your wife below, Arrowhead,” said the sergeant; “yonder is a sail where you may sleep yourself.”

“I thank my father. The Tuscaroras are not poor. The woman will look for my blankets in the canoe.”

“As you wish, my friend. Send your squaw into the canoe for the blankets, and you may follow her yourself and hand us up the paddles. As there may be some sleepy heads in the Scud, Eau-douce,” added the sergeant in a lower tone, “it may be well to secure the paddles.”

The Tuscarora and his wife stepped into the canoe, and appeared to be busy searching for the blankets.

“Come, bear a hand, Arrowhead,” said the sergeant who stood on the gunwale overlooking the two; “it is getting late.”

“Arrowhead is coming,” was the answer, as the Indian stepped towards the head of his canoe.

One blow of his keen knife severed the rope which held the boat, when the cutter glanced ahead, leaving the light bark behind.

The canoe was on the lee quarter of the Scud before the sergeant knew what had happened, and quite in her wake before he had time to tell his companions.

“Hard-a-lee!” shouted Jasper, letting fly the jib sheet with his own hands. Quick as the movement had been, it was not quicker than that of the Tuscarora. He had seized his paddle, and was already skimming the water, aided by his wife. The direction he took was southwesterly, or on a line that led him equally towards the wind and the shore.

“He will escape!” cried Jasper. “The cunning knave is paddling dead to windward, and the Scud can never overtake him!”

“You have a canoe!” exclaimed the sergeant. “Let us launch it, and give chase!”

But it was too late. The shore was distant less than half a mile, and the canoe was already glancing into its shadows at a rate to show that it would reach the land before its pursuers could probably get half the distance. The helm of the Scud was put up again,

and the cutter came up to her course on the other tack. Master Cap took the sergeant aside, and told him that he thought that the escape of this Indian showed treachery on the part of Eau-douce.

“What would you advise me to do, brother?” asked the sergeant, who had thought the same.

“In my opinion you should put this Master Eau-douce under arrest on the spot, send him below under the charge of a sentinel, and transfer the command of the cutter to me. All this you have power to do, the craft belonging to the army, and you being the commanding officer of the troops present.”

Sergeant Dunham deliberated more than an hour on this proposal, for, though prompt when his mind was made up, he was usually thoughtful and wary. He had long thought well of Jasper, still, suspicion had entered his mind, and so much were the artifices of the French dreaded, that, especially warned as he had been by his commander, it is not to be wondered the recollection of years of good conduct on Jasper's part should be forgotten under the influence of distrust. He consulted Lieutenant Muir, who also was seriously inclined to think that it would be well to put the control of the Scud into Cap's management. This decided the sergeant.

He told Jasper that Cap was to have charge of the cutter, and that he and his pilot were to go below and remain there. You may imagine Jasper's surprise at this order, but he was accustomed to obey without question, as all sailors do. A sentinel was placed at the hatch, who was given strict orders not to allow either to come on deck again. But this was unnecessary, as both Jasper and the pilot threw themselves on their pallets, which they did not leave again that night.

CHAPTER VI

CAP TAKES COMMAND

As soon as Cap found himself master of the deck he said to the sergeant,—

“You will just have the goodness to give me the courses and distances, that I may see that the boat keeps her head the right way.”

“I know nothing of either, brother Cap,” returned Dunham. “We must make the best of our way to the station among the Thousand Islands, where we shall land, relieve the party that is already out, and get information for our future government.”

“But you can muster a chart—something in the way of bearings and distances, that I may see the road?”

“I do not think Jasper ever had anything of the sort to go by.”

“No chart! And do you suppose that I can find one island out of a thousand without knowing its name or its position—without even a course or a distance?” exclaimed Cap.

“Perhaps one of the hands on deck can tell us the way,” answered the sergeant.

They walked aft until they stood by the sailor who was at the helm.

“Do you happen to know what may be the latitude and longitude of this island we are going to, my lad?” asked Cap.

“The what, sir?” asked the helmsman.

“Why the latitude or longitude; one or both.”

“I do not know what you mean.”

“Not know what I mean!” exclaimed Cap. “You know what latitude is?”

“Not I, sir,” returned the man, hesitating, “though I believe it is French for the upper lakes.”

“Whe-e-e-w!” whistled Cap. “Latitude, French for upper lakes! Harkee, young man; do you know what longitude means?”

“I believe I do, sir—that is five feet six, the regulation height for soldiers in the king’s service.”

“That will do—that will do. You’ll bring about a shift of wind, if you go on in this manner. I see very plainly, sergeant,” walking away again and dropping his voice, “we’ve nothing to hope for from that chap. I’ll stand on two hours longer on this tack, when we’ll heave-to and get the sound-

ings; after which we will have to let ourselves be governed by circumstances.”

To this the sergeant made no objections, and, as the wind grew lighter and the cutter sailed merrily along, he made a bed of a sail, on deck, and was soon lost in the sound sleep of a soldier. Cap continued to walk the deck, and not once did he close his eyes.

It was broad daylight when Sergeant Dunham awoke. He found the weather entirely changed; the view bounded by driving mist, the lake raging and covered with foam, and the Scud lying-to. According to Master Cap, the wind had died away to a calm about midnight, or just as he was thinking of heaving-to, to sound, for islands ahead were being seen. At one A. M. it began to blow from the north-east, accompanied by a drizzle. At half-past one, he stowed the staysail, reefed the mainsail and took the bonnet off the jib. At two, he was compelled to get a second reef aft; and by half-past two, he had put a balance reef in the sail and was lying-to.

“How long have you been heading in this direction, brother Cap?” inquired the soldier; “and at what rate may we be going through the water?”

“Why two or three hours, mayhap.”

“As the north shore lies only some five or six

leagues from us, might it not be well to call up Jasper Eau-douce and tell him to carry us back to Oswego? It is quite impossible we should ever reach the station with this wind directly in our teeth," said the sergeant.

Cap, however, was very much opposed to this plan. He said that it would destroy the discipline on the cutter.

"I once knew a master of a vessel," he said, "who went a week on a wrong course rather than allow he had made a mistake; and it was surprising how much he rose in the opinions of his people, just because they could not understand him."

"That may do on salt water, but it will hardly do on fresh," answered Dunham. "Rather than wreck my command on the Canada shore, I shall take Jasper out of arrest."

"And make a haven in Frontenac! No, sergeant, the Scud is in good hands, and will now learn something of seamanship. Leave it all to me, and I pledge you the character of Charles Cap that it will all go well."

Land was now nowhere visible. The waves were short and curling, and the water looked green and angry. Soon those who had been below came on

deck. Both Mabel and Pathfinder were convinced of Jasper's innocence, and they appealed to the sergeant to let him assume command again, but Dunham would not listen to them.

Several hours passed away, the wind gradually getting to be heavier, and the sea rising. It was now evident that the Scud was drifting into the broader and deeper parts of the lake.

"This bit of fresh water, after all, has some spirit, I find," cried Cap, about noon, rubbing his hands in satisfaction at finding himself once more wrestling with the elements. "I like this, sergeant, and shall get to respect your lake if it holds out twenty-four hours longer in this fashion."

"Land ho!" shouted the man who was stationed on the forecastle.

Cap hurried forward, and there, sure enough, the land was visible through the drizzle, at a distance of about half a mile, the cutter heading directly toward it.

"Why, it is the garrison!" exclaimed Dunham.

The sergeant was not mistaken. There was the fort they had left the day before. The ramparts, the dark palisades, the roof of a house or two, the tall, solitary flagstaff with its halyards blown steadily

out, were all soon to be seen, though no sign of life could be discovered. The wind roared around the garrison ceaselessly, the raging water answered its strains with hissing spray and sullen surges. The dark forest lay back of the buildings, grand and sombre. A man or two was seen on some elevations, and then the entire ramparts next the lake were dotted with human beings.

“They see us,” said the sergeant, “and think we have returned on account of the gale, and have fallen to leeward of the port.”

The Scud had now forged so near in, that it was necessary to lay her head off shore again. She was soon flying away on the top of the surges, dead before the gale. The fort and the groups of anxious watchers on its rampart were swallowed up in the mist. The cutter again began to wallow her weary way towards the north shore. About sunset the Scud wore again to keep her off the land during the hours of darkness. Just as the night turned, the fury of the wind became so great that Cap found it impossible to bear up against it, the water falling on the deck of the little craft in such masses as to cause her to shake to the center. Jasper would have carried the cutter inshore long before this, and placed her in safety in some secure

anchorage, but Cap still disdained to consult the young master below.

It was one in the morning when the storm staysail was again got on the Scud, the head of the mainsail lowered, and the cutter put before the wind. For eight hours did she scud, in truth, in the boiling caldron of the lake. The dawn of day brought little change. Cap, however, was perfectly composed. He stood on the forecastle, his arms crossed, watching the seas as they broke and glanced past the reeling cutter. At this instant, one of the hands gave the unexpected cry of "A sail!"

The strange vessel was about two cables' length ahead of the Scud. She was a full-rigged ship.

"That is the French king's ship, Le Montcalm, and she is standing in for the Niagara, where her owner has a garrison and a fort," said one of the sailors.

The Scud was now heading directly for the Frenchman; and, the distance between the two vessels having diminished to a hundred yards, it was a question if there would be room to pass.

"Port, sir—port!" shouted Cap. "Port your helm and pass astern!"

The crew of the Frenchman were seen assembling to windward, and a few muskets were pointed, as if

to order the people of the Scud to keep off. The water was dripping from the muzzles of two or three light guns on board the ship, but no one thought of loosening them for service in such a tempest. Her black sides glistened and seemed to frown, but the wind howled through her rigging, whistling the thousand notes of a ship. The next send of the sea drove the Scud down upon the quarter of the Frenchman, so near her that it seemed, at the next surge ahead, she would drive bows foremost into the planks of the other vessel. But this was not to be. Rising from the crouching position she had taken, like a panther about to leap, the cutter dashed onward, and, at the next instant, she was glancing past the stern of her enemy, just clearing the end of her spanker boom with her own lower yard.

The young Frenchman who commanded the Mont-calm, leaped on the taffrail, raised his cap and saluted as the Scud shot past. A few hours followed and darkness came again. All through the night, the pitching of vessel, the hissing of the waters, the dashing of spray, as the little craft plunged into the seas, and the howling of the wind terrified the people on board. During this night, Cap slept soundly for several hours. The day was just dawning when

he felt himself shaken by the shoulder, and, arousing himself, he found the Pathfinder standing at his side. During the gale the guide had appeared little on deck, for his modesty told him that seamen alone should interfere with the management of the vessel.

“What is all this to leeward?” cried Cap, rubbing his eyes. “Land, as sure as my name is Cap, and high land too!”

The Pathfinder made no reply, but looked anxiously at his companion.

“Land, as certain as this is the Scud!” repeated Cap. “A lee shore with as pretty a line of breakers as one could find on the beach of all Long Island!”

The sergeant now joined them. “We are seriously situated, brother Cap,” said he. “The two hands on the forecastle tell me that the cutter cannot carry any more sail, and her drift is so great that we shall go ashore in an hour or two.”

Cap made no reply, but gazed at the land with a rueful face.

“It may be well,” the sergeant continued, “to send for Jasper and consult him as to what is to be done. There are no French here to dread, and the boy will save us from drowning.”

“Let the fellow come; let him come,” answered the old seaman.

Jasper was sent for, and instantly made his appearance, looking mortified and anxious. When he first stepped on deck, he cast one hurried glance around until his eye caught a view of the highlands to leeward.

“I’ve sent for you, Master Jasper,” said Cap, folding his arms, “in order to learn something about the haven to leeward. Do you know of any port under our lee?”

“None,” answered Jasper. There is a large bay at this end of the lake, but it is unknown to us all, and not easy to enter. The coast is a wilderness until you reach the mouth of the Niagara in one direction, and Frontenac in the other. North and west, they tell me, there is nothing but forest and prairies for a thousand miles. I think, sir, before two hours are over the cutter will have to anchor.”

“Anchor!—not out here in the lake?”

“No sir; but in yonder, near the land.”

“You do not mean to say, Master Eau-douce, you would anchor on a lee shore in a gale of wind!”

“If I would save my vessel, that is exactly what I would do, Master Cap.”

“Whe-e-e-w! I’ve been a seafaring animal, boy and man, forty-one years, and I never heard of such a thing. Why, Pathfinder here has more seamanship in him than that comes to. You can go below again, Master Eau-douce.”

Jasper quietly bowed and withdrew; still as he passed down the ladder, he cast a lingering, anxious look at the horizon to windward, and the land to leeward.

Mabel was the only person in the outer cabin when Jasper returned to it. She believed the boy to be innocent of the charges laid against him.

“Tell me one thing, Jasper,” she said, as he sat near her; “are you guilty of treachery?”

“I am not, Mabel,” answered he earnestly. “As I hope for mercy hereafter, I am not.”

“I knew it—I could have sworn it,” returned the girl warmly. “And yet my father means well.”

While they were talking, the pilot was sent for by the sergeant and Cap. He gave the same advice that Jasper had—to anchor. Jasper was again called, as the storm increased. The sergeant took the young man’s side as he thought of the danger of his ship.

“It is insanity to anchor,” cried Cap.

“His Majesty underwrites the Scud, brother, and I am responsible for the lives of my command. These

men are better acquainted with Lake Ontario than we can possibly be."

"We are drifting down upon the breakers so rapidly," said Jasper, "that little need be said. Half an hour must settle the matter, one way or the other; but I warn Master Cap that we shall fill and founder before the second line of rollers is passed!"

"And how would anchoring help the matter?" demanded Cap furiously, as if he felt that Jasper was to blame for the gale.

"By bringing the cutter head to sea we should lessen her drift, and even if we dragged through the breakers, it would be with the least possible danger."

By this time the Scud was within a mile of the shore, on which the gale was blowing with violence. The small portion of the mainsail that was actually set, quivered under the gusts, as if at each moment the stout threads which held the fabric together were about to be torn apart. The drizzle had ceased, but the air for a hundred feet above the surface of the lake was filled with dazzling spray, while, above all, the sun was shining gloriously in a cloudless sky. Between the cutter and the shore the view was wild and appalling. The breakers extended near half a mile; while the water within their line was white with foam, the

air above them was so far filled with vapor and spray as to render the land beyond hazy and indistinct.

While the sergeant and Cap were looking at this scene, Jasper and his crew were busy on the forecastle. On these narrow waters anchors were never stowed inboard, and Jasper was saved much of the labor that would have been necessary in a vessel at sea. Everything was got ready to throw the anchors overboard at the proper moment. These preparations completed, Eau-douce left the forecastle where the seas were dashing inboard at every plunge of the vessel, and walked to a dryer part of the deck aft.

“Shall I take the helm?” he inquired of Cap, “and see if we can reach a creek that lies to leeward?”

“Do so—do so,” said the other, “since, to be frank with you, Eau-douce, I can see nothing better to be done. We must beach or swamp!”

Springing aft, Jasper soon had the tiller in his own hands. The rag of sail that had so long been set was taken in. Jasper, watching his time, put the helm up, the head of a staysail was loosened forward, and the light cutter fell off and was soon in the trough of the sea. At the next moment the little vessel appeared flying down towards the breakers at a rate that threatened destruction. In five or six minutes Jasper put the

helm down again, when the bows of the Scud came up to the wind. A sign from Jasper, and the anchors were thrown. In less than ten minutes from the moment when Jasper went to the helm, the Scud was riding head to sea, with the two cables stretched ahead in lines that resembled bars of iron.

“This is not well done, Master Jasper!” angrily exclaimed Cap, when he saw the trick that had been played on him. “I order you to cut, and to beach the cutter without a moment’s delay. Throw a lead-line overboard and ascertain the drift!” he roared to the people forward.

The lead was no sooner on the bottom than the line tended forward, and in about two minutes it was seen that the cutter had drifted her length dead in towards the bluff. Jasper looked grave, for he well knew nothing would hold the vessel did she get within the vortex of the breakers.

“Traitor!” exclaimed Cap, shaking a finger at the young commander, though passion choked the rest. “You must answer for this with your life! If I were at the head of this expedition, I would hang you at the end of the main boom lest you escape drowning.”

“Come—come,” said the sergeant, “Jasper appears to have done all for the best.”

“Why did he not run for the creek he spoke of—why has he brought us here, dead to windward of that bluff?”

“I trust to the undertow,” said Jasper. “I headed for the bluff, because I knew it was stronger at that point than at any other.”

“Undertow!” exclaimed Cap. “Who ever heard of saving a vessel from going ashore by the undertow!”

“The lad is right, brother,” put in the sergeant. “I have often heard the sailors of the lake speak of such a thing.”

Jasper now explained what he meant by the undertow. The water that was driven up on the shore by the gale was compelled to find its level by returning to the lake. This could not be done on the surface, where both wind and waves were urging it toward the land, and it formed a sort of lower eddy by which it flowed back again to its own bed. This current had received the name of the undertow; and as it would act on the bottom of a vessel that drew as much water as the Scud, Jasper trusted to this reaction to keep his cables from parting. In short, the upper current would act against the lower one.

At length, the man at the lead announced that the anchors had ceased to drag and that the vessel had brought up. Jasper sprang forward. Instead of

resembling bars of iron, the cables were now curving downwards, and the cutter rose and fell on the seas as they came in, with the ease of a ship when the power of the wind is relieved by the counteracting pressure of the water.

“There is no longer any danger!” Jasper exclaimed.

It was near noon when the gale broke. In less than two hours after the wind fell, the surface of the lake was no longer glittering with foam, though the waves came rolling constantly towards the shore. Everything on board ship was got in readiness for prompt departure, though it was impossible to make head against the sea with the light wind that blew from the eastward, and all thoughts of getting under way that afternoon were abandoned.

As they had a bark canoe on deck, a party was made up of Sergeant Dunham, his daughter, and the Pathfinder, to go on shore for an hour or so where the sergeant wished to do some hunting.

CHAPTER VII

THE SCUD REACHES STATION ISLAND

Accustomed to the canoe, Mabel took her seat in the center with great steadiness, her father was placed in the bows, while the guide steered in the stern. There was little need of impelling the boat by means of a paddle, for the rollers sent it forward, at moments, with a violence that set at defiance every effort to govern its movements. More than once, before the shore was reached, Mabel wished herself back on the Scud. But she was no coward, although at times her heart was in her mouth, as the bubble of a boat floated on the very crest of the wave, appearing to skim the water like a swallow. She laughed as, left by the gleaming water, they appeared to linger behind, ashamed of having been outdone in the headlong race. Though the distance between the cutter and the land was more than a quarter of a mile, it took a very few moments to reach the shore. On landing, the sergeant took his gun and said,—

“Pathfinder will remain near you, Mabel, and no

doubt he will tell you some of the traditions of this part of the world, or some of his own experiences with the Mingos."

The guide laughed and promised to take care of Mabel, and in a few minutes the father had disappeared into the forest. Mabel seated herself on a rock, while Pathfinder stood beside her. They had a view of the lake, which stretched away toward the northeast, glittering beneath the rays of the afternoon sun.

"This is indeed being on a frontier!" exclaimed Mabel.

"I have coasted this lake in search of skins before the war, and have been here already," said Pathfinder; "not at this very spot, for we landed yonder where you may see the blasted oak that stands above the cluster of hemlocks——"

"How can you remember all these trifles?"

"These are our streets and houses; our churches and palaces. Remember them, indeed! I once made an appointment with the Big Serpent to meet at noon near the foot of a certain pine at the end of six months, when neither of us was within three hundred miles of the spot. When I reached the tree, I found the Serpent leaning against its trunk with torn leggings and mudded moccasins."

“And where is the Delaware now—why is he not with us to-day?”

“He is scouting on the Mingo trail,” answered the guide.

They talked for a while, until the sergeant's foot was heard crushing the dried twigs near by, and then the three made their way to the beach to embark for the Scud.

Ontario is like a quick-tempered man; sudden to be angered, and as soon pacified. The sea had already fallen, and Jasper had hoisted his sails in readiness to depart as soon as the expected breeze from the shore should fill the canvas. It was just sunset as the cutter's mainsail flapped, and its stem began to sever the water. The head of the vessel was kept looking up along the south shore, it being the intention to get to the eastward again as fast as possible. The night that followed was quiet, and all slept tranquilly.

Jasper was allowed to work the craft, but under the direction of Cap. The appearance of day brought all on deck again. East, west, and north, nothing was to be seen but water glittering in the rising sun; but southward stretched the endless belt of woods. Suddenly an opening appeared ahead, and then the massive walls of a fort with outworks, bastions, block-

houses and palisades, frowned on a headland that bordered the outlet of a broad stream. Just as the fort became visible, a little cloud rose over it, and the white ensign of France was seen fluttering from a lofty flagstaff.

“Let us be all eyes in passing the enemy’s post at Niagara, for such I take this fort to be,” said the sergeant.

The wind was now fresh enough to urge the Scud through the water with considerable speed, and Jasper eased her helm as she opened the river, and luffed nearly into the mouth. A dull, distant, heavy roar came down through the opening in the banks, swelling on the currents of the air like the deeper notes of some immense organ.

“That is the surf we have in this quarter of the world,” said Pathfinder. “That is old Niagara that you hear, and this noble stream is the Niagara River.”

“Have you seen these falls, Pathfinder?” asked Mabel, eagerly.

“I have—yes, I have, and an awful sight I saw at that same time. The Serpent and I were out, scouting about the garrison there, when he told me to look at the wonder. I had heard some marvels concerning the spot from the soldiers of the 60th, though I hardly

believed half they told me. Well, we came suddenly upon the stream, a short distance above the fall, and a young Delaware who was in our company found a bark canoe, and he would push into the current to reach an island that lies in the very center. All we could say did not change his mind, and the lad had his way. The canoe was no sooner fairly in the rapids, than down it went as one sails through the air, and no skill of the Delaware could resist the stream. At first, he shot across the current so swiftly that we thought he would prevail; then he turned the head up stream, and struggled in a way that was fearful to look at. One faltering stroke of the paddle set him back, and then he lost ground, foot by foot, inch by inch, until he got near the spot where the river looked even and green, and as if it were made of millions of threads of water, all bent over some huge rock, when he shot backwards like an arrow and disappeared, the bow of the canoe tipping just enough to let us see what had become of him. I met a Mohawk later who had seen the whole affair from the bed of the stream below, and he told me that the Delaware continued to paddle in the air until he was lost in the mists of the falls."

"And what became of him?" asked Mabel.

"He went to the happy hunting grounds of his

people, no doubt, for though he was risky and vain, he was also just and brave."

A gun at this moment was discharged from a block-house near the fort, and the shot, one of little weight, came whistling over the cutter's mast, a warning to approach no nearer. The Scud was now in the current, and she was soon carried far enough to leeward to be out of danger, and she quietly continued her course along the land. All that day the wind hung to the southward, and the cutter kept about a league from the land, running six or eight knots in perfectly smooth water. Occasionally, the vessel stretched across bays so deep as to deserve the names of gulfs. Rivers poured into the great reservoir of the lake, and their banks could be traced inland for miles by the outlines of trees, but no sign of civilization appeared anywhere.

When the sun was setting, the Scud was already a hundred miles towards the Oswego, into which river Sergeant Dunham now thought it his duty to go. Jasper continued to hug the shore all night, and the wind lasted long enough to enable him to carry the cutter within a league or two of the fort. When the day dawned, the vessel had the mouth of the Oswego well under her lee, distant about two miles, and, just as the morning gun from the fort was fired, Jasper

gave the order to ease off the sheets and to bear up for his port.

At that moment, a cry from the forecastle drew all eyes towards the point on the eastern side of the outlet, and there, just without the range of shot from the light guns of the works, lay the Montcalm, evidently in waiting for their appearance. To pass her was impossible. After a consultation, the sergeant again changed his plan, determining to make his way towards the station for which he had first started out, trusting to the speed of the Scud to throw the enemy far astern. The Montcalm, firing four or five guns of defiance, threw abroad several of the banners of France, and was soon in chase, under a cloud of canvas.

For several hours the two vessels were pressing through the water as fast as possible, making short stretches to windward. At noon, the French ship was hull down to leeward, and some islands were near by, behind which Jasper said the cutter could hide and conceal her future movements. Left to himself, Jasper Western soon proved how much was really in him. He weathered upon the islands, passed them, and, coming out to the eastward, kept broad away with nothing in sight in his wake or to leeward.

By sunset, again, the cutter was up with the first of

the islands, and before it was dark she was running through the narrow channels on her way to the station. At nine o'clock, Cap insisted that they should anchor, for he feared at every opening in the maze of islands that the party would find themselves under the guns of a French fort.

The Scud was brought-to in a small bay where it would have been difficult to find her by daylight, and where she was perfectly hidden at night. All but a sentinel on deck went below and slept until morning.

The next day Jasper left the main channel and wound his way, with a good stiff breeze and a favorable current, through passes that were sometimes so narrow that there seemed hardly room enough for the Scud's spars to clear the trees, while at other moments he shot across little bays and buried the cutter again amid rocks, forests, and bushes. At last they came to a natural rocky quay where the vessel was secured by good fasts run to the shore. The station was reached, and all were glad to spring upon land once more.

The island selected by the soldiers of the 55th as a station was small, containing about twenty acres of land, and had been partly stripped of its trees. A little grassy glade covered nearly half its surface. The

officers of the troops thought that a sparkling spring near by had early caught the attention of the Indians, and that they came here often for hunting or salmon fishing.

The shores of Station Island were completely fringed with bushes, and these answered as a screen to conceal the persons within their circle. Some six or eight low huts had been built to be used as quarters for the officer and his men. These huts were built of logs and had been roofed by bark.

At the eastern extremity of the island was a small, densely wooded peninsula with a thicket of closely matted underbrush. Here a small blockhouse had been erected. The logs were bullet-proof, squared and jointed; the windows were loopholes; the door massive and small, and the roof was framed of hewn timber, covered with bark to keep out the rain. The lower apartment held the stores and provisions, the second story was intended for a dwelling as well as for the fortress, and a low garret was divided into two or three rooms and could hold ten or fifteen persons. The whole building was less than forty feet high. Care had been taken to build the blockhouse near a spring in the rock, so that a bucket could be dropped into the water if need be in time of siege. The upper

stories projected several feet beyond the lower, and pieces of wood filled the openings cut in the log flooring which were intended as loops and traps. To mount from one story to another, ladders were used. These blockhouses were built to retreat to, in cases of attack.

The hour that followed the arrival of the Scud was one of hurry and excitement. The party in possession were all eager to return to Oswego. They hurried on board the vessel, and Jasper was ordered to take them back to the fort. The cutter was soon in motion, leaving its former passengers on the island.

As the sun was setting the sergeant, who had been much occupied at what was called the harbor, came into his hut followed by Pathfinder and Cap. Mabel was already seated at the table which had been laid for supper.

"Lest you should be surprised at not seeing us, Mabel, when you awake in the morning, I must tell you now that we intend to march this very night," said the sergeant to his daughter.

"And leave me and Jennie, the soldier's wife, on this Island, alone!" exclaimed Mabel.

"No, my daughter, not quite so unmilitary as that. We shall leave Lieutenant Muir, Cap, Corporal McNab, and three men to hold the garrison during our absence."

“But why leave us behind, dear father?” asked Mabel.

“You are a good girl, Mabel, but you must halt here,” answered Dunham. “We shall leave the island to-morrow before the day dawns, and we shall take the two largest boats, leaving you the other and one bark canoe. We are about to go into the channel used by the French, where we shall lie in wait, perhaps a week, to cut off their supply boats that will pass up on their way to Frontenac loaded with blankets, trinkets, rifles, ammunition—in short, with all the stores with which the French bribe the savages. By cutting off these supplies, we shall gain time on them, for the articles cannot be sent across the ocean again this autumn.

“But, father,” said Mabel, “does not our King employ Indians also?”

“Certainly, girl, and he has a right to employ them. It is a very different thing whether an Englishman or a Frenchman employs a savage, as everybody can understand.”

“But I do not see the difference. If it is wrong in a Frenchman to hire savages to fight his enemies, it would seem to be equally wrong in an Englishman. *You* will admit this, Pathfinder?”

"It's reasonable," answered the hunter. "Still, it is worse to be friends with a Mingo than with a Delaware."

"And yet," said Mabel, "they both scalp and kill young and old—women and children."

"The tribes have different ways of showing their natures," answered Pathfinder.

"I do not understand," sighed Mabel. "What is right in King George, it would seem, ought to be right in King Louis."

After talking over a few more details, and supper being ended, the sergeant dismissed his guests, and soon all retired for the night.

CHAPTER VIII

DEW-OF-JUNE WARNS MABEL

It was not only broad daylight when Mabel awoke, but the sun had actually been up some time. Springing to her feet and rapidly dressing herself, she was soon in the open air.

At first, the island seemed deserted. Collected around a fire, however, which belonged to the camp, Mabel saw her uncle and the others of the party at breakfast. The huts were silent and empty, and the low, but towerlike summit of the blockhouse rose above the bushes. The sun was just casting its brightness into the open places of the glade, and not a cloud was visible in the blue autumnal sky.

Mabel walked towards an end of the island where she was completely shut out of view by the trees and bushes. Here she got a stand on the very edge of the water by forcing aside the low branches, and stood watching the little ripples on the surface. Suddenly she thought that she caught sight of a human form among the bushes that lined the shore of the island

that lay directly before her. The distance across the water was not a hundred yards, and though she might be mistaken, still it was safer to draw back among the leaves and try to conceal herself as much as possible. She was about to leave her post and hurry to her uncle to tell him of her suspicions, when she saw the branch of an alder thrust beyond the bushes on the other island and waved toward her, as she fancied, in a sign of friendship.

After a moment's hesitation she broke off a twig, fastened it to a stick, and, thrusting it through an opening, waved it in return. This dumb show lasted two or three minutes on both sides, when Mabel saw that the bushes opposite were cautiously pushed aside, and a human face appeared at an opening. At a glance, Mabel saw that it was the face of Dew-of-June, the wife of Arrowhead. Both girls stepped fearlessly out of their hiding places, and Mabel beckoned to the Indian woman. The latter disappeared for a moment, and soon showed herself again in the end of a bark canoe, the bow of which she had drawn to the edge of the bushes, and of which the body still lay in a sort of covered creek.

Mabel was about to invite her to cross, when the voice of her uncle was heard calling to her. Making

a gesture for the Tuscarora girl to conceal herself, Mabel sprang from the bushes and tripped up the glade. Her uncle had called her to breakfast, but Mabel said she was not ready yet, and hurried back to the thicket. With half a dozen noiseless strokes of the paddle, Dew-of-June's canoe was hidden in the bushes of Station Island. In another minute Mabel held her hand, and was leading her through the grove to her own hut. This latter was so placed as to be completely hidden from the sight of those at the fire, and they both entered it unseen. Mabel told the Indian girl to stay there until she returned, and then went to the fire and took her seat among the rest.

"Late come, late served, Mabel," said her uncle, between two mouthfuls of broiled salmon, "it is a good rule and keeps laggards up to their work."

"I am no laggard, uncle, for I have been up near an hour, and exploring our island," answered his niece.

Her mind was so much occupied with her guest, that, seizing the first favorable moment, she left the circle and was soon in her own hut again. Carefully fastening the door, and seeing that the curtain was drawn before the single little window, Mabel led June,

as she was called by those who spoke English, into the outer room.

"I am glad to see you, June," said Mabel, with one of her sweetest smiles. "What has brought you here, and how did you discover the island?"

"Talk slow," said June, also smiling, "more slow—too quick."

Mabel repeated her questions.

"June, friend—friend come to see friend," returned the Indian woman.

"There is some other reason, June. You would not betray me—would not give me to the French—to the Iroquois—to Arrowhead?"

June passed her arm fondly around Mabel's waist and shook her head.

"If June has something to tell her friend," said Mabel, "let her speak plainly. My ears are open."

"June 'fraid Arrowhead kill her," answered June. "Blockhouse good place to sleep—good place to stay."

"Do you mean that I may save my life by sleeping in the blockhouse, June?"

"Blockhouse very good; good for squaw."

"Well, I understand this, June, and will sleep in it to-night. Of course I am to tell my uncle what you have said."

Dew-of-June started. "No, no—no, no," she answered, "no good to tell Saltwater. He much talk and long tongue. Thinks woods all water; understand not'ing. Saltwater got tongue, but no eye, no ear, no nose—not'ing but tongue, tongue, tongue."

Mabel saw that it would be of no use to call her uncle, as probably the Indian girl would become silent if he were present.

"You think, then, June," Mabel continued, "that I had better live in the blockhouse?"

"Good place for squaw. Logs t'ick."

"Does anyone but yourself know how to find this island? Have any of the Iroquois seen it?"

"Tuscarora everywhere—Oswego, here, Frontenac, Mohawk—everywhere. If he see June, kill her."

"June," said Mabel eagerly, putting her arm around her, "we are friends. From me you have nothing to fear, for no one shall know of your visit. If you could give me some signal just before the danger comes, some sign by which to know when to go into the blockhouse,—how to take care of myself."

June paused, and then said quietly.

"Bring June pigeon."

"A pigeon! Where shall I find a pigeon to bring you?"

“Next hut—bring old one—June go to canoe. Go out first—count men—one, two, t’ree, four, five, six,” here June held up her fingers and laughed; “all out of way—good; all but one—call him one side. Then sing, and fetch pigeon.”

Mabel smiled, and prepared to go. At the door, however, she stopped and looked back at the Indian woman.

“Is there no hope of your telling me more, June?” she said.

“Know all now; blockhouse good—pigeon tell—Arrowhead kill.”

Mabel went out of the hut to see where the different people on the island were. Three were at the fire, while two had gone to the boat, one of whom was Lieutenant Muir. The sixth man was her uncle, and he was arranging some fishing tackle not far from the fire. The soldier’s wife was just entering her own hut, and this accounted for the whole party. Mabel now, pretending to have dropped something, returned nearly to the hut she had left, singing a tune, stooped as if to pick up some object from the ground, and hurried towards the hut June had mentioned. This was a dilapidated building, and had been used by the soldiers as a sort of storehouse for their live stock.

Among other things, it contained a few dozen pigeons which were regaling themselves on a pile of wheat.

Mabel did not have much difficulty in catching one of them, though they fluttered and flew about the hut with a noise like that of drums; and, concealing it in her dress, she stole back to her own hut with the prize. It was empty, and without doing more than cast a glance in at the door, the girl hurried down to the shore. At the canoe she found June, who took the pigeon, placed it in a basket that she had made herself, and repeating the words, "Blockhouse good," she glided out of the bushes and across the narrow passage as noiselessly as she had come. Mabel knew that when June freed the pigeon it would return to Station Island again, and then she would be on the lookout for danger.

On returning from the shore, Mabel noticed that a small piece of red bunting, such as is used in the ensigns of ships, was fluttering at the lower branch of a tree, fastened in a way to allow it to blow out, or droop like a vessel's pennant. She saw at a glance that this bit of cloth could be seen from a near by island; that it lay so near the line between her own hut and the canoe as to leave no doubt that June had passed near it, if not directly under it; and that it

might be a signal to those who were probably lying in ambush near them. Tearing the little strip of bunting from the tree, Mabel hurried on, hardly knowing what to do, but intending to move to the block-house with Jennie, even if she could not persuade the others to follow. Her walk was interrupted by the voice of Muir.

“Where are you going so fast, pretty Mabel?” he cried; “and what is that you are twisting around your finger?”

“It is nothing but a bit of cloth—a sort of flag.”

Mabel told him where she had found it.

“This looks surprisingly like a piece from the Scud’s ensign,” said the lieutenant as he examined the cloth. Mabel thought of Jasper, and her heart sank, but she did not answer. She took a hasty leave of her companion, and was about to hurry away to the hut of the other woman, when Muir laid a hand on her arm.

“One word, Mabel,” he said, “before you go. This little flag may, or it may not, have a particular meaning; if it has, may it not be better to put it back again while we watch for some answer that may betray the conspiracy; and if it mean nothing, why nothing will follow.”

“This may be all right, Mr. Muir,” answered Mabel, “but the flag might be the occasion of the fort’s being discovered.”

She stayed to say no more, but was soon out of sight, running into the hut towards which she had been first proceeding. The lieutenant remained on the very spot for quite a minute, first looking after Mabel, and then at the bit of bunting in his hand. Soon he was beneath the tree where he fastened the mimic flag to a branch again. But he left it fluttering from a part of the oak where it was still more exposed than before to the eyes of anyone on the river.

Mabel told the soldier’s wife to carry the necessary articles into the blockhouse, and warned her not to be far from it during any time in the day. She did not explain why, but merely said that she had seen signs in walking about the island that made her think the enemy might be lurking near. Then the girl went to see the corporal, whose name was McNab, and who had the real command of the station.

“My father thinks well of you, Corporal,” she said, “or he would not have left you in charge of this island and all it contains. I know he depends on your prudence. He expects the blockhouse, in particular, to be strictly attended to.”

“Mistress Mabel, take the word of an old soldier who has seen his fifty-fifth year, when he tells you that there is no danger in this Indian warfare. We Scots come from a naked region, and have no need, and less relish, for covers, and so ye’ll be seeing, Mistress Dunham——”

The corporal gave a spring into the air, fell forward on his face and rolled over on his back—the whole passing so suddenly that Mabel had scarcely heard the sharp crack of the rifle that sent a bullet through his body. Mabel did not shriek—did not even tremble, but stepped forward to help the man.

“Ye’ll be getting into the blockhouse as fast as possible,” McNab whispered, as Mabel leaned over him to catch his last words.

CHAPTER IX

IN THE BLOCKHOUSE

It was but a few minutes' run to the blockhouse, the door of which Mabel had barely gained, when it was closed violently in her face by Jennie, the soldier's wife, who thought only of her own safety. The reports of five or six rifles were heard, while Mabel was trying to get in. After a little delay, however, she found the door yielding to her pressure, and she forced her slender body through the opening. She held the door open long enough to see whether any of her own party were in sight, but none appeared. She then ascended the ladder to the room above, where by means of loopholes she was able to get as good a view of the island as the surrounding bushes would allow.

To her great surprise, Mabel could not, at first, see a living soul on the island, friend or enemy. Neither Frenchman nor Indian was visible, though a small white cloud that was floating before the wind, told her in which quarter she ought to look for them. The rifles had been fired from the direction of the island

whence June had come. Going to the loop that commanded a view of the spot where McNab lay, Mabel was horrified to see all three of his soldiers lying lifeless at his side. Turning towards the spot where the boat was, she could see that it was still fastened to the shore, but neither Cap nor Lieutenant Muir was to be seen.

Suddenly Mabel heard the door creak on its hinges, and a moment later she saw Jennie rushing in the direction of the fallen soldiers, and she now remembered that one of them was this woman's husband.

A terrific war whoop that pierced the glades of every island near broke the silence, and some twenty savages, horrible in their paint, rushed from the bushes. Arrowhead was foremost, and he at once attacked and killed the defenseless Jennie. Mabel stood rooted to the spot, horror-stricken, until she remembered that Jennie had left the blockhouse door unbarred. Her heart beat violently, for that defense alone stood between her and the savages. She sprang towards the ladder to descend and make sure of it. Her foot had not yet reached the floor of the second story, however, when she heard the door grating on its hinges, and she gave herself up for lost.

She sank on her knees and waited. Her ears heard

the bars, which went on pivots secured to the center of the door, turning into their fastenings. The girl sprang to her feet. At first, she fancied that her uncle had entered the blockhouse, and she was about to descend the ladder and throw herself in his arms; then the idea that it might be an Indian who had barred the door to shut out intruders, stopped her. There was a deep stillness below. If a friend, it could only be her uncle or Lieutenant Muir, for the rest of the party were all killed. For quite two minutes more a breathless silence reigned in the building.

During this time the girl stood at the foot of the upper ladder, the trap which led to the lower opening on the opposite side of the floor. Mabel's eyes were riveted on this spot, for she now began to expect to see, at each instant, the horrible sight of a savage face at the hole. She looked around her for a place to hide. The room contained several barrels, and behind two of these Mabel crouched, placing her eyes at an opening by which she could still watch the trap.

Now she thought she heard a low rustling, as if one were coming up the lower ladder; then followed a creaking that she was certain came from one of the steps of the ladder, which had made the same noise under her own light weight as she ascended.



(Facing page 111)

“The whole of the swarthy face had risen above the floor.”

There had never been a time in her life when Mabel heard more acutely, saw more clearly, or felt more vividly. As yet nothing was visible at the trap, but her ears told her that some one was within a few inches of the opening of the floor; next followed the evidence of her eyes, which beheld the dark hair of an Indian rising so slowly through the passage that the movements of the head might be likened to the minute hand of a clock; then came the dark skin and wild features, until the whole of the swarthy face had risen above the floor. But when Mabel gave a second look at the savage head, she saw the gentle, anxious, and even handsome face of June.

Mabel sprang to her feet, and came out in the center of the room. It would be hard to say which was the happier,—the white girl on finding that her visitor was the wife of Arrowhead, and not Arrowhead himself, or June at discovering that her advice had been followed, and that the blockhouse contained the girl she had so anxiously been looking for. They put their arms around each other, and the Tuscarora woman laughed in her joy.

“Blockhouse good,” said the young Indian.

“It is indeed good, June,” Mabel answered, with a shudder. “Tell me if you know what has become

of my uncle. I have looked in all directions without being able to see him."

"No here, in blockhouse?" asked June.

"Indeed he is not—I am quite alone in this place. Jennie rushed out to join her husband and was killed."

"June know—June see, very bad. Saltwater has boat; maybe he go on river."

"The boat is still on the shore, but neither my uncle nor Mr. Muir is anywhere to be seen."

"No kill, or June would see. Hide away!"

"You are too good and gentle for this sort of life, June; you cannot be happy."

"English too greedy," answered June angrily, "take away all hunting grounds; wicked king—wicked people. Paleface very bad."

"But what am I to do, June?" demanded Mabel. "It cannot be long before your people will assault this building."

"Blockhouse good."

"But they will soon discover that there is no gar-
rison. You yourself told me the number of people
that were on the island, and doubtless you learned
it from Arrowhead. Your people may set fire to this
building."

"No burn blockhouse," said June quietly. "Block-

house wet—much rain—logs green—no burn easy. No, no; Injun too much cunning.”

Mabel was about to make a reply, when a heavy push at the outer door interrupted her.

“They come!” she exclaimed,—“perhaps, June, it is my uncle or the lieutenant.”

“Why no look? Plenty loophole—made purpose.”

Mabel took the hint, and going to one of the downward loops that had been cut through the logs in the part that overhung the basement, she cautiously raised the little block that ordinarily filled the small hole, and caught a glance at what was pressing at the door. She started and changed color as she gazed.

“Redman?” asked June, lifting a finger in warning to be prudent.

“Four; and horrible in their paint. Arrowhead is among them.”

June had moved to a corner where several spare rifles had been placed, and had already taken one in her hand. She went to the loop and was about to thrust the muzzle of the piece through it, when Mabel seized her arm.

“No, no, no June,” said she; “not against your own husband.”

"No hurt Arrowhead," returned June; "no hurt redman at all. No fire at 'em; only scare."

Mabel understood, and June thrust the muzzle of the rifle through the loophole, and, taking care to make noise enough to attract attention, she pulled the trigger.

"You said you were not going to fire," said Mabel reproachfully.

"All run away before I fire," returned June laughing, and going to another loop to watch the movements of her friends. "See—get cover—every warrior. Think Saltwater and Lieutenant here. Take good care now."

June laid aside the rifle and came and seated herself near the box on which Mabel had sunk. In her imperfect manner the Tuscarora girl let her companion know that Arrowhead, though a chief, was in disgrace with his own people, and was acting with the Iroquois. Pretending to have friendship for the English, he had passed the summer in their service, while he was in truth acting for the French, and his wife journeyed with him in his wanderings, travelling for the most part in canoes. Her presence was no secret, her husband seldom moving without her. Mabel suggested that the Indian girl go out to see if Cap were still alive.

It was soon settled between them that June should leave the blockhouse at the first favorable moment.

They examined the island as thoroughly as they could from the different loops, and found that the savages were preparing for a feast, having seized upon the provisions of the English, and rifled the huts. The soldiers' bodies had been removed, and everything looked as usual. The savages wished to lure Sergeant Dunham and his party into an ambush on their return. June made her companion observe a man in a tree, a lookout, as she said, to give notice of the approach of any boat, although nothing would be likely to bring the expedition back so soon. The remaining boat had been secured, and was removed to the spot where the canoes of the Indians were hidden in the bushes.

Mabel and June descended the ladder and carefully unbarred the door. The last bar was just turned free of the brackets—the door was opened merely wide enough to allow her body to pass, and June glided through the space. Mabel closed the door again, and with trembling fingers turned the bars in their places. When all was fast, she ascended to the first floor, where she could get a glimpse of what was going on outside.

Long hours passed. She heard the yells of the savages; occasionally caught sight of them through the loops. Towards the middle of the day she thought she saw a white man on the island, though his dress and wild appearance at first made her take him for a newly arrived savage. The day seemed a month to the lonely girl. She thought it highly probable that the blockhouse would be left unmolested until the return of her father, in order to lure him into an ambushade. But everything was uncertain, and her mind was now filled with thoughts of captivity.

While light lasted, the situation was alarming enough, but as evening gradually came on, it became fearful. The savages had found the stores of liquor, and the drink had wrought them up to the point of fury. The French leader of the party went off to the other island, and Arrowhead was asleep in one of the huts. No sooner were their backs turned, than one of the Indian warriors who had lost his senses proposed to fire the blockhouse. The proposal was received with yells of delight by eight or ten more.

This was a fearful moment for Mabel. The first attempt was made at the door, against which the savages ran in a body, but the solid structure which was built entirely of logs defied their efforts. The rush of a

hundred men would have been useless. But Mabel did not know this, and her heart seemed to leap into her mouth, as she heard the heavy shocks. She seized the first moment of an interval between the sounds to look down through the loop.

She found that two or three of the Iroquois had been raking the embers they had done their cooking over, and had found a few small coals, and with these they were trying to light a fire. By the aid of a few dry leaves, a blaze was finally kindled. When Mabel stooped down over the loop, the Indians were making a pile of brush against the door, and as she gazed she saw the twigs take fire, the flame dart from branch to branch until the whole pile was cracking and snapping under a bright blaze. The Indians gave a yell of triumph and returned to their companions. Mabel remained looking down, scarcely able to tear herself away from the spot. As the pile kindled throughout, however, the flames mounted until they flashed so near her eyes that she was forced to retreat. Just as she reached the opposite side of the room, a forked stream shot up through the loophole, the lid of which she had left open. A barrel of water stood in a corner, and Mabel caught up a vessel, filled it and pouring it on the wood with a trembling hand extinguished

the fire at that particular spot. The smoke prevented her from looking down again for a couple of minutes, but when she did, she found that the pile of blazing brush had been overturned and scattered and that water had been thrown on the logs of the door which were still smoking, but no longer burning.

“Who is there?” said Mabel, with her mouth at the loop.

A light footstep sounded below, and one of those gentle pushes at the door, which just moved the massive beams on the hinges, was heard.

“Who wishes to enter? Is it you, dear uncle?”

“Saltwater no here,” was the answer. “Open quick—want to come in.”

Mabel hurriedly descended the ladder and turned the bars. Her first impulse was to rush into the open air, but June entered and barred the door.

“Bless you—bless you, June!” cried our heroine.

“No hug so tight,” answered the Tuscarora woman. “Paleface woman all cry, or all laugh. Let June fasten door.”

In a few moments the two were again in the upper room.

“Now tell me, June,” Mabel commanded, “what about my poor uncle.”

“Don’t know. No one see him; no one hear him; no one know anyt’ing. Lieutenant gone too.”

“They must have escaped! June, are there no means to prevent my father from falling into the Indians’ hands?”

“Don’t know,” answered the Tuscarora girl.

“Surely, June, you who have done so much for me will help my father,” pleaded Mabel.

“Don’t know fader—don’t love fader. June help her own people, help Arrowhead.”

“Tell me one thing,” said Mabel; “if my uncle comes in the night and asks to be admitted, you will let me open the door of the blockhouse that he may enter?”

“Certain—he prisoner here, and June likes prisoner. But Saltwater hide so close, he don’t know where he be himself.”

Here June laughed in her girlish way, and proceeded to tell Mabel what she had discovered in her absence.

Talking in this manner, the hours passed away unheeded, for both were too much interested to think of rest. Towards morning, however, Mabel was persuaded to lie down on one of the straw beds provided for the soldiers, where she soon fell into a deep sleep. June lay near her, and quiet reigned on the whole island.

CHAPTER X

PATHFINDER RETURNS

When Mabel awoke, the light of the sun was streaming in through the loopholes. She aroused June, and the two took a survey of what was passing around them. Not a sign of the presence of a living being on the island, was at first to be seen. There was a smothered fire on the spot where McNab and his comrades had cooked, as if the smoke that curled upwards from it was intended as a lure to the sergeant and his party; and all around, the huts had been restored to former order and arrangement.

June set about preparing their simple breakfast. After they had eaten, they took another survey of the island. Throughout the livelong day, not an Indian nor a Frenchman was to be seen. The night was far more quiet than the one before. The following day the sergeant was expected, and when Mabel awoke she ran eagerly to the loops, in order to see the state of the weather, as well as the condition of the island. The wind blew fresh from the southward,

and the air was filled with the signs of approaching storm.

"Saltwater!" exclaimed June, laughing, as she stood peeping through a loophole.

"My uncle! June, *you* will not let them harm him!"

By this time Mabel was at a loop, and sure enough, there were Cap and Lieutenant Muir in the hands of the Indians, eight or ten of whom were leading them to the foot of the block, for by this capture the enemy now well knew that there could be no man in the building. Mabel scarcely breathed until the whole party stood directly before the door. The French officer was among them. Lieutenant Muir called out to Mabel in a voice loud enough to be heard,—

"Mabel," he said, "we are threatened with instant death, unless you open the door to the conquerors."

"Tell me, uncle," cried Mabel, with her mouth at the loop, "what I ought to do."

The old seaman advised his niece to stay where she was, and keep the door barred, but Muir tried to persuade her to open the building.

"I shall remain as I am, Mr. Muir, until I get some tidings of my father," answered Mabel. "He will return soon."

The Indians took their prisoners away, and June, who had ascended to a trap in the roof, reported that the whole party had assembled to eat in a sheltered part of the island, where Muir and Cap were sharing in the good things as if they had no care on their minds.

Three or four hours flew by, and the day was wearing away. June was in the basement preparing their frugal meal, and Mabel had ascended to the roof, where she had the best view of the island possible. The sun had set, no sign had yet come of her father, and Mabel took a last look, hoping that the party would arrive in the darkness. The islands lay grouped so closely that six or eight different channels or passages between them were in view, and, in one of the most covered, lay a bark canoe containing a human being beyond a question. Mabel was sure that, if an enemy, her signal could do no harm, and, if a friend, that it might do good. She waved a little flag toward the stranger, taking care that it should not be seen from the island.

She repeated her signal eight or ten times in vain, and she began to despair of its being noticed, when a sign was given in return by the wave of a paddle, and then she saw that the man was Chingachgook. Her courage and spirits revived. The Mohican had seen

her; must have recognized her, as he knew she was of the party; and, no doubt, he would soon try to release her. But Mabel was now troubled about June. She knew that the Indian girl would never allow the Great Serpent to enter the blockhouse, without warning her own people. June loved Mabel, but no one else of the white people. She was faithful to her tribe, and would not give the Mohican any opportunity to gain a victory. All this Mabel realized, and as it grew dark, she tried to devise a plan by which she could get rid of the Indian girl.

“I feel uneasy, June, and wish that you yourself would go up again to the roof and look out upon the island,” said she. “I will go down and listen by the door, and we will thus be on our guard, at the same time above and below.”

This June did, and for three or four minutes, one girl was occupied in looking about her as well as the darkness would allow, and the other in listening below. Presently Mabel thought she noticed a slight push against the door. Anxious to let Chingachgook know that she was near, she began to sing in a low tone. A slight tap was heard. With unsteady hands the girl began to unbar the door. June’s moccasin was heard on the floor above her, when only a single bar was turned.

“What you do?” cried June angrily. “Run away—mad—leave blockhouse?”

The hands of both were on the last bar, and it would have been cleared from the fastenings, but for a vigorous shove from without which jammed the wood. Another and more vigorous push forced the bar, and the door opened. The form of a man was seen to enter, and both girls rushed up the ladder. The stranger secured the door, and cautiously ascended after the girls. June, as soon as it became dark, had closed the loops of the principal floor, and lighted a candle. By means of this dim taper the girls stood waiting to see their visitor when he had climbed the ladder. It would not be easy to say which was the more astonished on finding that Pathfinder stood before them.

“Oh, Pathfinder,” cried Mabel, “what has become of my father?”

“The sergeant is safe as yet, and victorious. We ambushed three boats, drove the French out of them, got possession and sunk them in the deepest part of the channel. We did not lose a man. As soon as the sergeant found himself successful, he sent me and the Serpent off in canoes to tell you how matters stood, and he is following with the two boats.”

"Can we not get into your canoe and go and meet my father?" asked Mabel.

"I don't know by which channel the sergeant will come, and there are twenty. The Serpent will be winding his way through them all, to find him. No, no, my advice is to remain here. The logs of this block-house are still green, and it will not be easy to set them on fire."

"Anything—everything, to save my father!" exclaimed Mabel.

"I do not see how the French found this island out," said Pathfinder thoughtfully. "The spot is well chosen, and it is not an easy matter, even for one who has travelled the road to and from it, to find it again. There has been treachery, I fear; yes, yes, there must have been treachery."

"Not Jasper Western," said Mabel impetuously.

"No, no," answered Pathfinder; "I'll answer for Eau-douce's honesty with my own scalp, or, at need, with my own rifle. What is that?"

"It sounds like oars," said Mabel. "Some boat is passing through the channel!"

Pathfinder closed the trap that led to the lower room to prevent June from escaping, blew out the candle, and went hastily to a loop. By the time the eye of the

scout had got a dim view of things without, two boats had swept past, and shot up to the shore at a spot some fifty yards beyond the blockhouse, where there was a regular landing. A number of men were now seen to leave the boats, and then followed three hearty English cheers. Pathfinder sprang to the trap, glided down the ladder, and began to unbar the door. But a single bar was turned, when a heavy discharge of rifles was heard. They were still standing in breathless suspense as the war whoop rang in all the surrounding thickets. The door now opened, and both Pathfinder and Mabel rushed into the open air. All sounds had ceased. After listening half a minute, however, Pathfinder thought he heard a groan near the boats, but the wind blew so fresh and the rustling of the leaves was so mingled with the passing air that he was far from certain.

“Pathfinder, let me go to my father,” cried Mabel, for the scout held her back.

“We must return to the blockhouse,” said Pathfinder; “I have left Killdeer there.”

At that moment his quick eye caught sight of five or six dark crouching forms trying to steal past him. Catching up Mabel as if she were a child, he succeeded in entering the building. He had fastened one bar



(Facing page 126)
"Catching up Mabel as if she were a child."

when a rush against the door threatened to force it from the hinges. To secure the other bar was the work of an instant.

Mabel now ascended to the first floor, while Pathfinder remained as sentinel below. Mabel relighted the candle, and the guide examined each floor carefully to make sure that there was no one in the block-house but Mabel and himself, for June had escaped.

“Pathfinder, I hear a groan below!” cried Mabel.

“We shall soon know whether a friend is there or not. Hide the light, and I will speak from a loop.”

The guide did not place his mouth to the loop itself, but so near it, that he could be heard without raising his voice.

“Who is below?” he demanded. “Is any one in suffering?”

“Pathfinder!” answered a voice that they knew at once to be Sergeant Dunham’s, “tell me what has become of my daughter.”

“Father, I am here, unhurt—safe,” cried Mabel.

A groan answered them, and both realized that the sergeant must be seriously wounded. They unbarred the door cautiously, and quickly drew in the injured man. They fixed a bed of straw for him, and Mabel got water for him to drink, but Pathfinder soon saw

that they could do nothing to help him, and that the chances of his living were very slight.

In broken sentences the sergeant related what had passed since he had parted with Pathfinder. He had determined to reach the island that night instead of encamping. They had landed without the slightest suspicion of danger, and had actually left their arms in the boat. Every man had fallen under the Indians' charge. Sergeant Dunham fell with the others, and had heard the voice of Mabel as she rushed from the blockhouse. He had been able to crawl as far as the door of the building.

The half hour that followed was very still. The wounded man slept, and Pathfinder examined the condition of the rifles of which there were a dozen kept in the building in the second story. Mabel, who watched by the side of her father, heard a guarded knock at the door. Supposing that it was Chingachgook, she arose, undid two of the bars, and held the third in her hand as she asked who was there. The answer was in her uncle's voice. Without an instant of hesitation, she turned the bar and Cap entered. Mabel closed the door again and barred it as before. Cap had escaped while the rest were sleeping, and had come to the blockhouse with the intention

of rescuing his niece. He was shocked and grieved to learn the sergeant's condition, and sat down by his side to tell of his adventures before the Indians had captured him in the rocks of the island.

Pathfinder came down the ladder and raised his finger for silence.

"We must be prudent," he said. "The savages are in earnest in their intention to fire the blockhouse. I hear the voice of Arrowhead among them, and he is urging them to do it this very night. We must be stirring, Saltwater, and doing too. Luckily, there are four or five barrels of water here."

Mabel took her place by her father, and the two men were soon in the upper room. Pathfinder opened a loop. The stillness that followed was broken by the voice of Muir.

"Master Pathfinder, a friend summons you to a parley. Come freely to one of the loops."

"What is your will?" cried the guide.

"The enemy is too strong for us, my brave comrade, and I come to counsel you to give up the blockhouse."

"I thank you for this advice," answered Pathfinder, "but I will not yield a place like this, while food and water last."

"The enemy is about to fire the building," said the lieutenant.

"The man who attempts to lay a pile of brush against these logs will get a taste of Killdeer's powder. Let them begin at once. They can burn wood and I'll burn powder. They can't set this building on fire with their arrows, for we've no shingles on our roof, but good solid logs and green bark, and plenty of water besides. The roof is so flat too, as you know yourself, that we can walk on it. So there is no danger on that score, while the water lasts. I'm peaceable enough, if let alone, but he who endeavors to burn this block over my head, will find the fire quenched in his own blood!"

"This is idle talk, Pathfinder! Foolhardiness is not courage."

"Enough said," cried Pathfinder. "You may trust the Mingos, Master Muir, but I have no faith in them! You have a knavish Tuscarora in your company there, who has art enough to spoil the character of any tribe, though he found the Mingos ready ruined to his hands, I fear."

Throughout this dialogue Pathfinder kept his body covered, lest a treacherous shot should be aimed at the loop, and he now told Cap to go to the roof in order to be in readiness to meet the first assault.

CHAPTER XI

THE SCUD COMES TO THE RESCUE

When the old seaman reached the roof he found no less than ten blazing arrows sticking to the bark, while the air was filled with the yells and whoops of the enemy. A rapid discharge of rifles followed, and the bullets came pattering against the logs in a way to show that the struggle had seriously commenced. Then the heavy report of a gun burst on the night, and the crashing of rending wood was heard, as a heavy shot tore the logs in the room above, and the whole blockhouse shook with the force of the shell. When it exploded Mabel shrieked, for she supposed that all above her was destroyed.

“No one is hurt,” called Pathfinder, with his head at the trap. “Your uncle is still on the roof, and as for myself, I’ve run the gauntlet of too many rifles to be scared about such a thing as a howitzer, and that in Indian hands.”

Mabel tried to give all her attention to her father, and not to heed the clamor and uproar around her.

Cap kept cool, and as he was now on the deck of a house, if not the deck of a ship, he moved about fearlessly and rashly. He was seen on every part of the roof, dashing the water right and left. The bullets whistled around him on every side, and his clothes were several times torn, but nothing cut his skin. When the shell passed through the logs below, the old sailor dropped his bucket, waved his hat and gave three cheers. From that instant the Indians ceased to fire at him, and even to shoot their flaming arrows at the block; for they thought that surely "Saltwater" was mad. They never lifted a hand against those whom they imagined had no reason.

When Pathfinder heard the sound of moccasined feet, and the rustling of brush at the foot of the building, he knew that the savages were again attempting to build a fire against the logs. He called to Cap from the roof, and told him to stand in readiness with water. He allowed the Iroquois to collect their heap of dried brush, to pile it against the block-house, to light it, and to return to their covers. Not until the bushes were in full blaze did he give the signal to Cap.

"Now pour away, Master Cap; we shall have no more fires lighted to-night."

Cap upset a barrel of water through the loop with a care that at once extinguished the flames.

The remainder of the night passed in peace. Pathfinder and Cap took turns in watching, while Mabel sat by her father's side.

As light returned, the men ascended to the roof to reconnoiter the state of things on the island. The gale was still blowing very fresh at south, and there were places in the river where its surface looked green and angry. While they stood gazing anxiously about them, Cap cried out in his hearty manner—

“Sail, ho!”

Pathfinder turned quickly, and there, sure enough, the canvas of a vessel was seen through the bushes, that fringed the shore of an island that lay to the southward and westward.

“That is the head of the Scud's mainsail,” said Cap.

“If that is Jasper, I hope that the lad may not run alongside of the bank, and fall into an ambush as the sergeant did,” said Pathfinder anxiously. “We should give the boy some sign in the way of warning.”

But this was not easy to be done. The Scud came foaming through the channel, with no one visible on her deck to make signs to; even her helm seemed deserted, though her course was steady. But as the

vessel drew nearer the mystery was explained. As the cutter had weatherboards of some little height, there was no doubt that her crew lay behind these, in order to be protected from the rifles of the enemy.

“I have it—I have it!” exclaimed Pathfinder; “there lies the canoe of the Serpent on the cutter’s deck, and the chief has got on board and told our condition.”

The gale was still blowing violently, and the air was filled with leaves which flew from island to island like flights of birds. The spot was silent, and not a savage was to be seen. The progress of the cutter was steady and rapid. There could not have elapsed ten minutes between the time when her sails were first seen glancing past the trees and bushes in the distance and the moment when she was abreast of the blockhouse. To the delight of both Cap and the guide, Jasper Eau-douce sprang upon his feet and gave three hearty cheers. Cap leaped upon the rampart of logs and returned the greeting, cheer for cheer.

“Stand by us, lad, and the day’s our own!” called Pathfinder.

The next moment the Scud was hid from view by the grove in which the blockhouse was concealed. When, however, the boat had made the circuit of the entire island, and had again got her weatherly position

in the channel by which she had first approached, her helm was put down, and she tacked. Jasper was familiar with the shore, and acquainted with the depth of water on every part of the island. He well knew that the Scud might be run against the bank, and he ventured so near that, as he passed through the little cove, he swept the two boats of the soldiers from their fastenings, and forced them out into the channel, towing them with the cutter. As all the canoes were fastened to the two Dunham boats, the savages were at once deprived of the means of leaving the island, unless by swimming, and they appeared to be instantly aware of this. Rising in a body, they filled the air with yells. The people of the Scud opened fire, and the savages slunk into their covers again.

As soon as the Scud reached the end of the island, Jasper sent his prizes adrift, and they went down before the wind until they stranded on a point more than a mile to leeward. Then the Scud came stemming the current again, through the other passage. Just as the cutter came abreast of the principal cove, on the spot where most of the enemy lay, the howitzer was unmasked and a shower of case-shot was sent hissing into the bushes. The savages sought new covers, and then June appeared with a white flag,

the sign of truce. Following her were Muir and the French officer. Jasper anchored directly abeam, and the howitzer, too, was kept trained upon the enemy, so that the besieged and their friends had no hesitation about exposing themselves.

“You’ve triumphed, Pathfinder,” called out the lieutenant, “and Captain Sanglier has come himself to offer terms. I am authorized to offer on the part of the enemy an evacuation of the island, and an exchange of prisoners.”

After a short discussion, all the savages on the island were collected in a body, without arms, at the distance of a hundred yards from the blockhouse, and under the gun of the Scud, while Pathfinder descended to the door of the blockhouse and settled the terms on which the island was to be evacuated by the enemy. The Indians were compelled to give up all their arms, even to their knives and tomahawks. Captain Sanglier was forced to yield all his prisoners, four of whom were found to be unhurt.

As soon as Jasper was made acquainted with the terms, he got the Scud under way, and running down to the point where the boats had stranded, he took them in tow again and brought them into the leeward passage. Here all the savages embarked, when Jasper

took the boats in tow a third time, and, running off before the wind, he soon set them adrift quite a mile to leeward of the island. The Indians were furnished with but a single oar in each boat to steer with, the young sailor well knowing that by keeping before the wind they would land on the shores of Canada in the course of the morning.

Captain Sanglier, Arrowhead, and June alone remained of the enemy. Canoes were kept for the departure of these three, when the proper moment should arrive. In the meantime Pathfinder and Cap prepared breakfast, as most of the party had not eaten for four and twenty hours.

Jasper had no sooner landed, than he was rudely seized by two of the soldiers and his arms were bound—under the direction of Muir.

“What does this mean?” cried Pathfinder, stepping forward and shoving the soldiers aside.

“It is by my orders, Pathfinder,” answered the lieutenant. “Did not Major Duncan himself denounce Jasper to Sergeant Dunham before we left the post? Have we not been betrayed, and is it not almost necessary to believe that this young man has been the traitor?”

“Jasper Eau-douce is my friend,” returned Pathfinder. “Jasper Eau-douce is a brave lad, and an

honest lad, and a loyal lad; and no man of the 55th shall lay hands on him short of Lundie's own orders. You may have authority over your soldiers, but you have none over Jasper or me, Master Muir."

"Won't you listen to reason, Pathfinder? You see this little bit of bunting? Well, where should it be found but by Mabel Dunham on the branch of a tree on this very island, just an hour or so before the attack of the enemy; and if you look at the fly of the Scud's ensign, you'll see that the cloth has been cut from out it."

"Talk to me of no ensigns and signals, when I know the heart," said the Pathfinder. "No, no, off hands or we shall see which can make the stoutest battle—you and your men of the 55th, or the Serpent here and Killdeer, with Jasper and his crew. How is it Captain Sanglier, do you see a traitor here?"

"Yes, sair," answered the Frenchman.

"Too much lie!" said Arrowhead in a voice of thunder, striking Muir's breast with the back of his own hand. "Where my warriors? Too much lie."

Muir extended a hand toward a gun, but Arrowhead was too quick for him. With a wild glance of the eye the Tuscarora leaped upon the lieutenant and killed him, and, uttering a yell, bounded into the

bushes. The white men were too bewildered to follow, but Chingachgook was more collected and the bushes had scarcely closed on the Tuscarora, than they were again opened by the Delaware in full pursuit.

Later, when the Serpent silently joined his friends, they knew that Arrowhead had met his fate.

CHAPTER XII

THEY LEAVE STATION ISLAND

Jasper turned to the Frenchman. "Speak, Monsieur," he said in English; "*am* I the traitor?"

"There he is!" said Captain Sanglier, pointing to Muir. "That is our spy, our agent, our friend! He was a rascal!"

All were shocked and startled at Muir's sudden death, but Captain Sanglier explained that it was Muir who had been the traitor, and had betrayed the island to the French. The letter sent to Duncan of Lundie telling of Jasper's treachery, had originally been written by Muir. He had given the signal to the enemy to bring on the attack, and intended to make way with Jasper to conceal his treason.

Pathfinder led Jasper aside, and squeezing his hand with the tears in his own eyes, he said:

"You know me, Eau-douce, and I know you, and this news has not changed my opinion of you in any manner. I never believed their tales, though it looked solemn at one minute, I will own; yes, it did look solemn, and it made me feel solemn, too. I never

suspected you for a minute, but I must own I never suspected Muir either.”

“And he holding his Majesty’s commission, Pathfinder!”

“It isn’t so much that, Jasper Western. He held a commission from God to act right, and to deal fairly with his fellow creatures, and he has failed awfully in his duty. The fellow must have had Mingo blood in his veins.”

When all these matters had been satisfactorily cleared up, and Cap had told Jasper how sorry he was that he had misjudged him, Pathfinder and Cap went to take Mabel from the blockhouse, and to try to comfort her for the loss of her father who had died.

The night passed tranquilly, as did the whole of the following day, Jasper declaring that the gale on the lake was so severe, that the Scud could not leave the island until the third day. This detained Captain Sanglier also, who did not leave until the weather had moderated and the wind become fair. On the morning of the third day, Jasper had made all his preparations; the different effects were embarked, and Mabel had taken leave of June. All was ready and everyone had left the island except the Indian woman, Pathfinder, Jasper, and Mabel. June hav-

ing wandered away to mourn unseen for her husband, Pathfinder led the way to the canoes which were to take them to the Scud, but when he drew near the shore, instead of taking the direction of the boats, he motioned to his companions to follow. He proceeded to a fallen tree that lay on the margin of the glade, out of view of those in the cutter. Seating himself on the trunk, he signed to Mabel to take her place on one side of him, and to Jasper to occupy the other.

"Nothing remains," he said, "but for me to take leave of you that you may depart."

"To take leave!" exclaimed Mabel.

"To leave!" echoed Jasper. "You do not mean to leave us, my friend."

"'Tis best, Mabel—'tis altogether best, Eau-douce, and wisest. You will go back to Oswego, while I shall return to the wilderness."

"Oh Pathfinder!" cried Mabel, "you will come to us sometime. We shall see you again."

"Yes, yes," returned the guide as he looked wistfully in Mabel's pretty face. "The Lord, who governs the lake and the forest alike, keep you both happy and worthy to be so. Now, we'll go to the canoe; it's time you were on board."

The Pathfinder stood leaning on his rifle until the

canoe had reached the side of the Scud. Mabel wept as if her heart would break, nor did her eyes once turn from the open spot in the glade where the form of Pathfinder was to be seen, until the cutter had passed a point that completely shut out the island.

Dew-of-June and Chingachgook kept the guide company, for a month, on Station Island. The season was getting too far advanced to stay. The trees had lost their leaves, and the nights were becoming cold and wintry. It was time to depart.

They went in two canoes. Two days they paddled westward, and as many nights encamped on islands. When they reached the lake, it was found smooth and grassy as a pond. It was the Indian summer, and the calm of June slept in the hazy atmosphere. On the morning of the third day they passed the mouth of the Oswego, and at noon entered the little bay where the Scud lay at anchor.

A small clearing was on the shore, and near the margin of the lake was a new log dwelling. Here lived Jasper and Mabel, who had been married within a week after they left the island. Pathfinder stayed with his old friends an hour; he asked Mabel to take care of Dew-of-June, who was still mourning for Arrowhead. This Mabel promised to do.

Chingachgook awaited his friend on the margin of the woods where a path led into the forest. Mabel, her husband, and June, all watched Pathfinder depart. He was soon lost in the depths of the forest.

They never saw him again. The next year, at the invitation of Cap, Jasper and his wife went to New York, where Jasper became a successful merchant. Mabel, at intervals of years, received valuable presents of furs, and though no name ever accompanied the gifts, she knew who sent them. Later in life, she visited the interior on the banks of the Mohawk, and there heard of the most renowned hunter of that portion of the State, who was known in that region of the country by the name of Leather-Stocking.

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